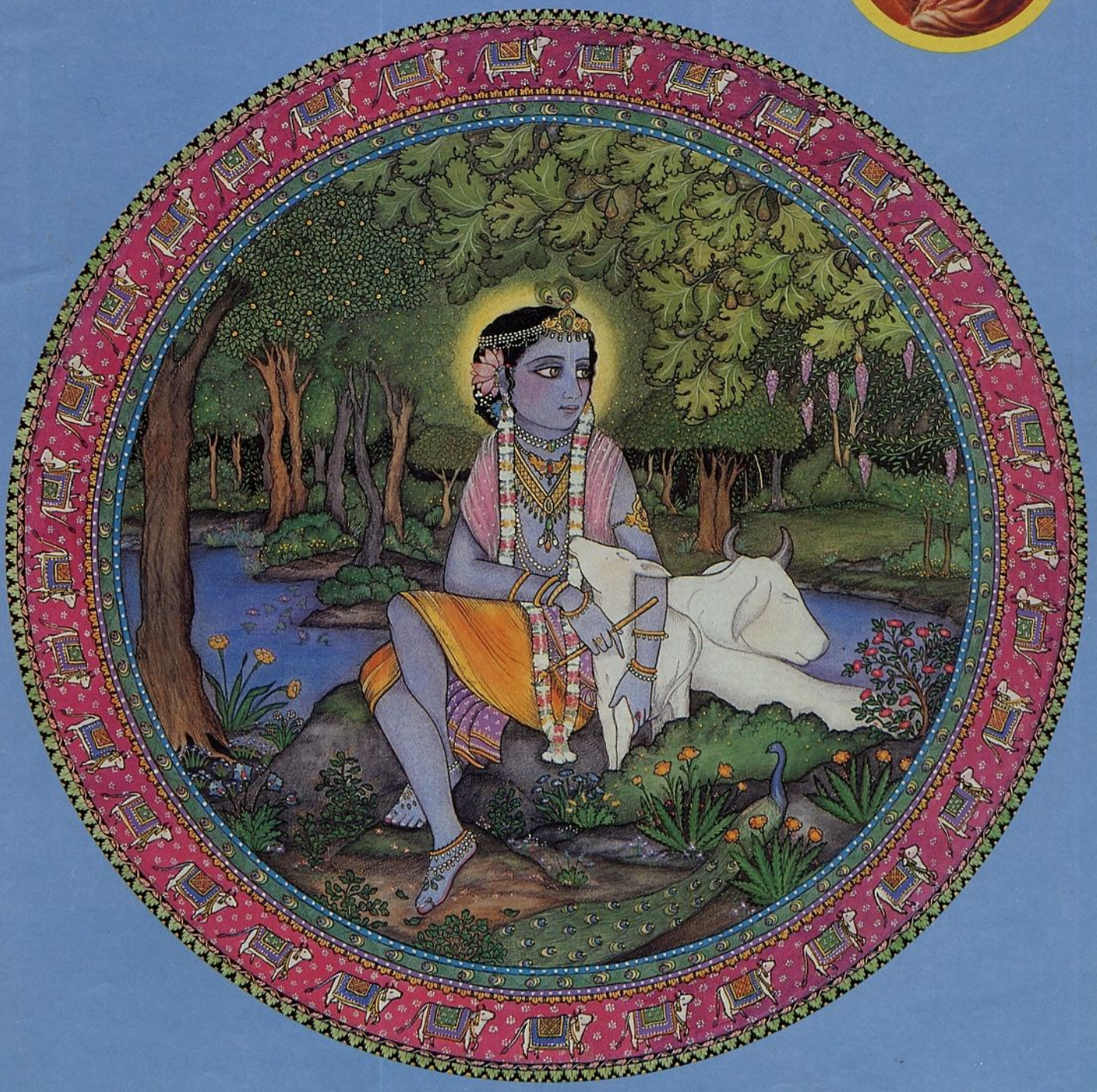
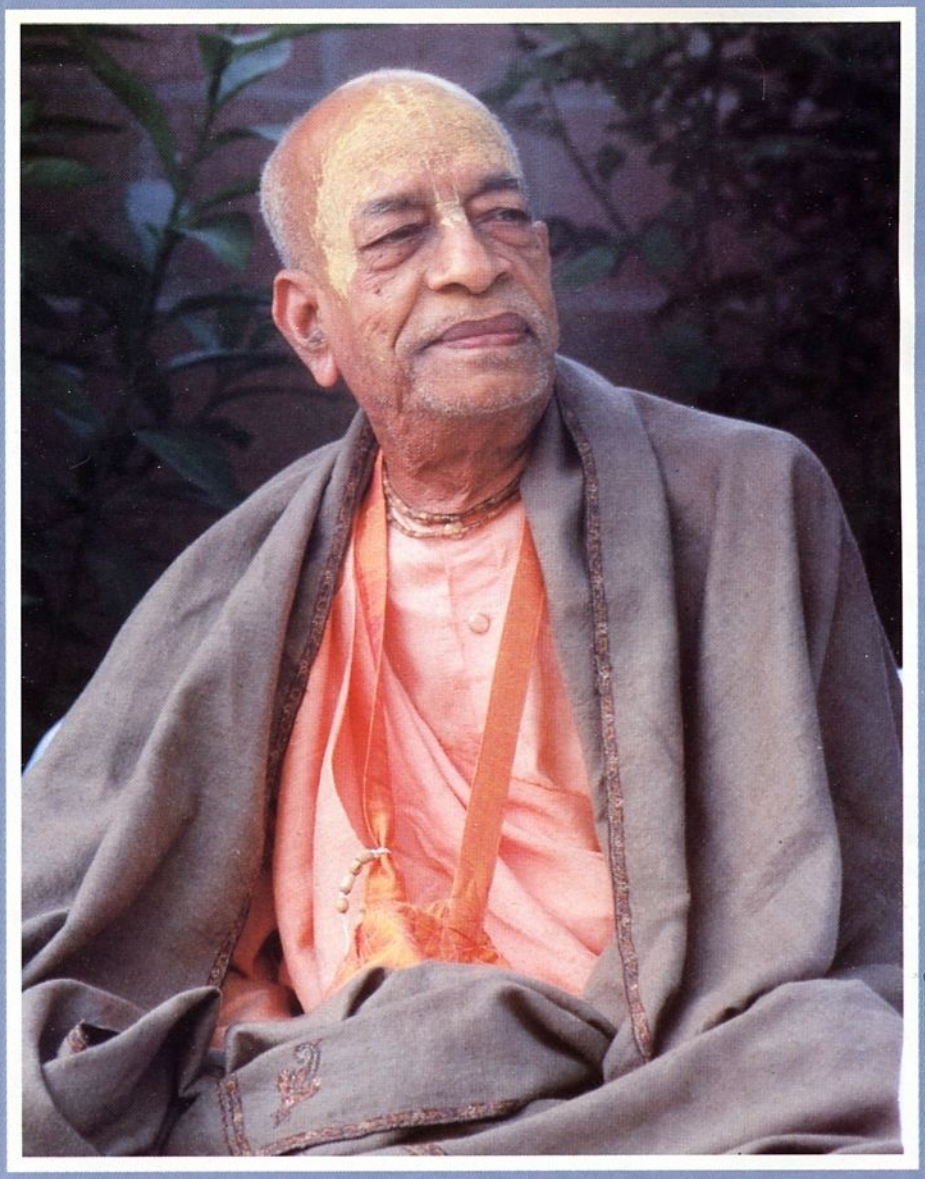
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

# BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.24 No.1-2 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



**His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,** founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas,* schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in Vṛndāvana, India, the place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.



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BACK TO GODHEAD is the monthly journal of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Society (in New York City, in 1966), he put into writing the purposes he wanted it to achieve. They are as follows:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books, and other writings.

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

# BACK TO GODHEAD

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in but, long **ā** like the **a** in far (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in evade, long **ī** like the **i** in pique. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in rim, and **c** like the **ch** in chair. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch, jh, dh,** etc.) as in staunch-heart, hedge-hog, and red-hot. Pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

SPIRITUAL NAMES. Members of the International Society for Krishna Conciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with dāsa (dāsī for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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**COVER:** The Vedic scriptures describe God in this way: "Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes" (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1). Because Kṛṣṇa is God, He possesses in full all the opulences we find attractive, such as youthfulness, beauty, strength, and wisdom. Kṛṣṇa doesn't have to work; the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the material world take place by His will. He eternally enjoys in the spiritual world and is ever inviting us to join Him there for an eternal life of pleasure in relationship with Him. On the back cover: Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, His eternal consort. (Paintings by Kim and Chris Murray, from *Illuminations from the Bhagavad-gītā.* Copyright 1980. Used by permission.)

# Questions For the Supreme Authority

You won't find the answers in today's educational institutions.

Text and artwork ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Drawing by Parikṣit dāsa.

A lecture in Bombay on September 25, 1973, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*arjuna uvāca*
*prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva*
*kṣetraṁ kṣetra-jñam eva ca*
*etad veditum icchāmi*
*jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ ca keśava*

"Arjuna said: O my dear Kṛṣṇa, I wish to know about *prakṛti* [nature], *puruṣa* [the enjoyer], and the field and the knower of the field, and of knowledge and the object of knowledge."

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.1)

Arjuna wanted Kṛṣṇa to answer six questions: What is *prakṛti,* this material nature? Who is the *puruṣa,* the enjoyer of material nature? What is the *kṣetra,* the field of activities? Who is the *kṣetra-jña,* the one who is enjoying or acting on the field? And what is *jñāna,* knowledge, and *jñeya,* the object of knowledge?

So, Kṛṣṇa replied, *idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate:* "This body is the *kṣetra,* the field of activities," and *etad yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetra-jña iti tad-vidaḥ:* "The *kṣetra-jña* is the one who knows this body." The first purpose of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is to teach us that we are not the body but the knower of the body. Generally everyone thinks, "I am this body." But that is not a fact. One should know, "I am not this body but rather the knower of the body."

For example, I am sitting on this seat. I am not this seat: I am the person sitting on this seat. Similarly, when somebody asks me what I am, if I identify myself as something having to do with this body, that is foolishness. In the *śāstra* [scripture] it is said, *yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tridhātuke sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma-ijya-dhīḥ . . . sa eva go-kharaḥ. Go* means "cow," and *kharaḥ* means "ass." So the person who identifies his body as his self is like a cow or an ass.

According to the *Āyur-veda,* the body is

---

**Above left,** the supreme authority: Lord Kṛṣṇa. **Right,** His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

a bag of three elements: mucus, bile, and air. Or, we can easily understand that this body is made of flesh, bone, blood, urine, stool, and so on. If you analyze the body, you'll find that these are its ingredients. But only one who is ignorant would say that these ingredients are his self.

So, in spiritual life one must first understand fully, "I am not this flesh, blood, urine, and other things in this body. I am separate from them. I am a spirit soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord." That is real knowledge.

All over the world education is being given to students, but this knowledge is absent from the educational institutions. Therefore everyone is identifying the body as the self and identifying things in relationship with the body as "mine." As the *śāstra* says, *sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma-ijya-dhīḥ:* "Foolish men think that their wives and other relatives are theirs and that the land of their birth is worshipable."

At the present moment, throughout the whole world everyone is identifying himself with his body and worshiping the land in which his body was born. And persons in relationship with the body are thought to be kinsmen. But according to the *śāstra,* anyone who thinks in this way is like an ass or a cow. Therefore, according to the Vedic literature, the present society is a civilization of cows and asses. In other words, it is an animalistic civilization.

No one can be happy in a society of animals. In the jungle there is always a struggle for existence, fighting between one animal and another. Still, compared to human society the jungle is peaceful. At present, throughout the whole world we have become less than the animals because people do not know who they are or what is the ultimate goal of their life. People do not know these things. Therefore to dispel this ignorance Arjuna inquires, "What is the field of activities and the knower of the field? What is knowledge, and what is the object of knowledge?"

So, first Kṛṣṇa replies that this body (*kṣetra*) is our field of activities. There are different types of body—8,400,000 forms—which nature supplies according to our desire. And how does nature supply these forms? Kṛṣṇa explains this in another place in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.10]: *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram.* "Under My supervision, nature produces the bodies of all moving and nonmoving living entities."

The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart (*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛddeśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*). Lord Kṛṣṇa is situated both outside and inside everyone. We simply need to make our eyes perfect in order to see Him. Kṛṣṇa is not impossible to see. He can be seen—but only by one who has the proper eyes to see Him. As the *Brahma-saṁhitā* [5.38] says, *premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti/ yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpam:* "Those who have developed Kṛṣṇa consciousness, love of Godhead, can see the beautiful Supreme Personality of Godhead within their hearts."

Now, in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* Kṛṣṇa is described as *acintya-guṇa-svarūpam,* "the reservoir of all inconceivable, transcendental qualities." We cannot conceive of Kṛṣṇa's qualities. For example, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati/ tad aham . . . aśnāmi:* "If one offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water with devotion, I will eat it." How is Kṛṣṇa eating? That we cannot see. But He is eating. Therefore His qualities are *acintya,* inconceivable.

> *At the present moment, throughout the whole world everyone is identifying himself with his body and worshiping the land in which his body was born. But according to śāstra, anyone who thinks in this way is like an ass or a cow.*

Our conception of eating is that we can eat through the mouth. Whatever eatables are offered to us, we pick them up and put them into our mouth. This is our process of eating. But because Kṛṣṇa is *acintya,* inconceivable, His eating process is different from ours. As stated elsewhere in the *Brahma-saṁhitā, aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-manti:* "Every limb of His body can work as any other limb." With our eyes we can see; if we close our eyes we cannot see. But even if Kṛṣṇa closes His eyes, He can see everything with His hand. Now, this is inconceivable.

So, we offer the food to Kṛṣṇa, and He eats it by seeing it. He can eat through His eyes, just as we can eat through our mouth. Then you may argue, "If He has eaten the food, why is it lying as it was offered in the beginning?" That is answered in the *Īśopaniṣad* [Invocation]: *pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate.* "If the complete whole is taken from the complete whole, still the complete whole remains." In other words, Kṛṣṇa can take the whole plate of food, but still the whole plate remains. That is His inconceivable, transcendental quality.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a great science, a spiritual science. Unfortunately, we have no educational system to understand this spiritual science. Especially in this age, everything is godlessness. Therefore people are not happy. The purpose of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to make people happy by teaching them how to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. That is our mission.

Similarly, that is the mission of all devotees, such as Arjuna. Arjuna is Kṛṣṇa's personal friend; he always lives with Kṛṣṇa. There cannot be any ignorance on the part of Arjuna. But still he asks questions just for our benefit. And Kṛṣṇa answers his questions.

Why should Kṛṣṇa's answers be taken so seriously? Because He is the supreme authority, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If we receive knowledge from the supreme authority, then it is perfect knowledge. Suppose you get some knowledge from your superior, one who is more educated than you, more experienced. Then you accept that knowledge as authoritative. In this material world there may be somebody who is authoritative, but he cannot be the ultimate authority. The ultimate authority is Kṛṣṇa (*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*).

So, if we receive knowledge from the ultimate authority, our knowledge is perfect. And if we receive secondhand knowledge from the ultimate authority, that is also good. "Secondhand knowledge" is knowledge from one who has received knowledge from Kṛṣṇa and who repeats what he has received. That knowledge is also perfect. But one who speculates—"It may be like that, it may be like this"—that knowledge is imperfect.

In the modern world all knowledge is speculative, hypothetical. There is no perfect knowledge. So if you want to be in perfect knowledge, you have to take knowledge from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa is delivering that knowledge in the form of *Bhagavad-gītā.* Arjuna is asking questions so that people may receive perfect knowledge from Kṛṣṇa and thus perfect their lives.

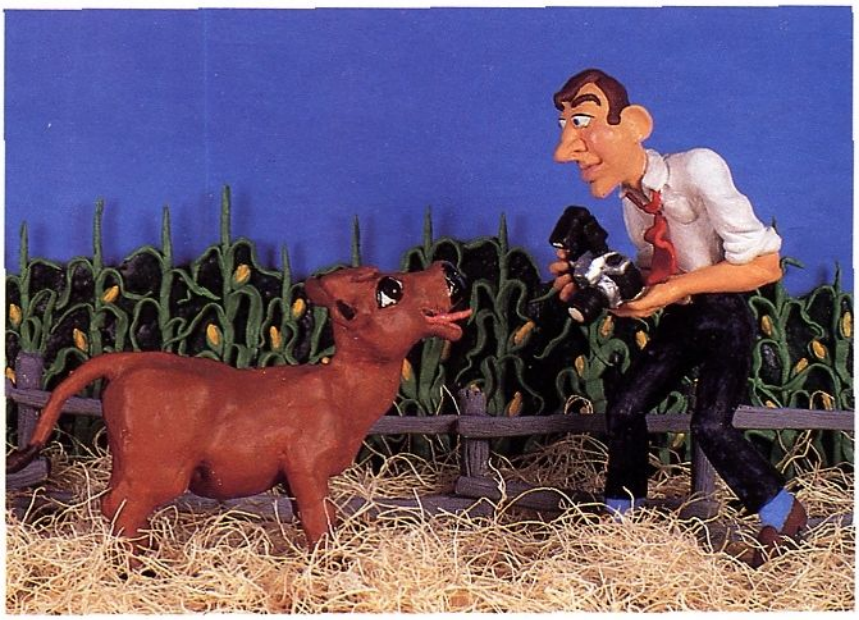
Now, Arjuna asked Kṛṣṇa, "What is *jñāna,* knowledge?" And Kṛṣṇa answered, "To know the body and the owner of the body—that is knowledge." In the ordinary sense, if you understand that this is a house and that the proprietor of the house is such-and-such gentleman, then your knowledge is perfect. Similarly, if we

(*continued on page 20*)

# A SCOOP FOR THE TRASH

A veteran reporter confronts some key environmental issues.

by MATHUREŚA DĀSA



Tom Hacknead, a veteran reporter for the *Daily Trash* in Los Angeles, felt restless. He'd been covering events at the city morgue for twenty years and needed a change. One Monday morning an article in *Newsbleak* magazine on environmental catastrophes caught his eye. "That's it!" he thought, "I'll become an environmental expert and focus on the dying biosphere instead of on dead people."

From *Newsbleak*, Tom learned that a blanket of pollution created by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil was enveloping and slowly suffocating the earth. To halt the buildup of this blanket, experts advised (Tom always quivered with excitement at the word "expert") that we rely more on nuclear energy, which generated radioactive waste instead of carbon dioxide.

Trouble was, *Newsbleak* continued, the disposal of radioactive wastes was an "explosive issue," since no one wanted any buried in his back yard. "Of course not," Tom mused, with a veteran's humor and insight. "Burying the stuff would turn the earth into a radioactive mattress! And to round things out, we still have that good old-fashioned pillow of smog." Tom was getting a feel for his new turf.

The alternatives to nuclear energy and fossil fuels, Tom read, were renewable sources like solar energy and hydropower. This information had a mysterious ring to it. What with the L.A. smog, and his office at the *Daily Trash* having no windows, Tom hadn't *seen* any sun for ages. He couldn't imagine that sunlight could power his hair dryer or his tanning lamp. As for hydropower, Tom contemplated the faucet in the men's room down the hall but couldn't grasp the concept.

Determined to track down an expert on solar energy and hydropower, Tom called his Aunt Maud in Nevada. "Sure," she told him, "one of the world's leading authorities on sunlight and water is my Daddy's cousin Ezra. He lives about a hundred miles from Reno."

Tom packed his hair dryer and tanning lamp in the trunk of his car. He arrived at the home of Ezra Zukes Livvin late Tuesday afternoon. Ezra Zukes ("E. Z." to his friends) was sitting on his front porch, softly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* on a string of prayer beads. Tom introduced himself as Maud's nephew, accepted a seat beside E. Z., pulled out his pen and pad, and started right in with his questions.

"Mr. Livvin, how long before we'll have generators that can harness the sun's energy efficiently enough to replace, say, nuclear power?"

"How long?" E. Z. looked surprised. "Why look, I've got a whole field full of solar generators that put nukes to shame. Didn't you see?"

Tom noticed for the first time thousands upon thousands of six-foot spikes driven into a field the size of a couple of city blocks. "You built all those yourself?" he asked. "That must have been hard work."

"Not so hard," said Ezra. "I didn't build them. Threw them in last May. Not so hard."

Tom imagined Ezra throwing the spikes from his porch, landing each one perfectly perpendicular, and fairly evenly spaced, across the entire field. "And these things transform sunlight into usable energy?" Tom queried.

"These things are called corn, Mr. Hacknead," said E. Z., a little impatient. "I plant them, water them, harvest them, and . . ."

©Andrew Day [Mathureśa dāsa].

3-D ART BY KEŚĪSŪDANA DĀSA

"Water?" said Tom, his ear sharp for every nuance. "Does that have anything to do with hydropower?"

"Sure," said Ezra, "corn needs sunlight *and* water to grow. Lord Kṛṣṇa provides the sunlight. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* He says 'The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me.' "

Tom figured Kṛṣṇa must be another one of Aunt Maud's cousins. "But what about this hydropower?" he pressed, eager to get his story.

"Rain's the best kind of hydropower," said E. Z. "In the Ninth Chapter of the *Gītā,* Kṛṣṇa says, 'O Arjuna, I give heat, and I withhold and send forth the rain.' " E. Z. chuckled, "Around here, Kṛṣṇa mostly withholds the rain, so I irrigate. But the water still comes from Him."

"And what do you do with the corn power you produce, Mr. Livvin?"

"Feed it to my oxen and the rest of my herd. And I use the oxen, in turn, to plow my corn fields, wheat fields, and my favorite—the zucchini patch. The *Gītā* says that plowing and cow protection are the first duties of the business community, before trade, banking, nuclear power, and all that. Who needs nukes? With just solar energy and hydropower, I generate corn power, wheat power, ox power, milk power, and zucchini power."

Tom found Ezra's expertise intimidating, but drawing on his experience interviewing coroners, he pushed on. "Now, finally, about these oxen . . ." Tom tried in vain to remember, from a grade school course on mammals, what an ox looked like. "Let's see—aardvark, anteater, oxymoron, unicorn . . ."

"C'mon, I'll show you," said E. Z. with a sigh, leading Tom across a yard to a red-and-white barn.

Stepping inside, Tom drew back. "My goodness," he gasped, "that dog's enormous!"

"That's a calf," said Ezra. "Isn't she pretty?"

Tom had never heard of a calf-dog before. *Talk about pollution and waste disposal!* he thought. *What do you do with a mutt this size?* The sidewalk outside Tom's apartment building in L.A. was always littered with dog feces, but mostly from miniature poodles. Calf-dog indeed!

"How do you dispose of the, uh, droppings from these . . ." Tom began.

"I spread them on my fields," said Ezra.

"On your fields," Tom repeated, muffling his surprise. And then, disguising his clinching question with a burst of congeniality, he chortled, "Well, yes, I don't suppose their droppings *would* be radioactive."

"Nope," said Ezra. "Best fertilizer there is."

"Well, thank you for your time, Mr. Livvin," said Tom, heading for his car.

"You're welcome. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Stay longer if you like," said Ezra.

"Thank you, but no," replied Tom. "I have an article to write."

Piling into his car with his pen and notepads, Tom headed for the highway back to Reno and L.A. What a difficult new subject the environment was. But boy, did he have a story for the *Trash.*

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# LETTERS

We welcome your letters. Write to
BACK TO GODHEAD
41 West Allens Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

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If the Hare Kṛṣṇa members believe that all sin and evil will be compensated by nature's laws, and that according to the law of *karma* any good or bad will be met with good or bad reactions in this life or the next, then what is the need for hell? In Christian terms, all sinful people must go to hell and be punished, but according to ISKCON, all sinful people receive reactions to sin in the form of disease, death, poverty, separation from home, friends and family members, etc., in either this life or the next. Or they are sent to lower or higher planets. So do all sinful people go to hell, or do they undergo karmic reactions, or both?

Bhakta Bill
Tokyo, Japan

OUR REPLY: One problem in understanding *karma* is that we tend to take the analogy with Newton's second law too literally. It is not correct to say that a karmic action, like a physical action, has an "equal and opposite reaction." Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that karmic reactions for both good and bad works are compounded. He gives this example: If I do something good by giving someone, say, $100 in this life, I will have to come back in the next life to collect, say, $400. There's interest. The same thing happens with sinful acts. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is explained that cow-eaters must take birth as cows and be killed for as many times as there are hairs on the cow's body.

This may sound extreme, but consider the other side. If one performs even fairly insignificant pious activities, the results are unimaginable. For instance, there are amazing benefits from fasting completely on even one Ekādaśī day. So the reactions are not "equal and opposite."

Therefore, there is suffering in hell *and* in the next life because it is all punishment for the same sins. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains it like this: "On the planet of Yamarāja, the sinful man is given the chance to practice living in the hellish conditions which he will have to endure in the next life, and then he is given a chance to take birth on another planet to continue his hellish life. For example, if a man is to be punished to remain in hell and eat stool and urine, then first of all he practices such habits on the planet of Yamarāja, and then he is given a particular type of body, that of a hog, so that he can eat stool and think that he is enjoying life" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.30.29, purport).

You will notice that Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "to continue his hellish life." So it is all part of the same "sentence" for his illegal, sinful activities.

Another consideration is that the situation we find ourselves in is partly a punishment for sinful actions, but it is also due to our own desires. Those desires are nurtured by our sinful acts and sinful association, and we could even say that they are a worse reaction than the physical suffering of hell—because our desires keep us bound up in material existence. In other words, our desires are part of our *karma,* and even though we may pay our debt in hell for sinful acts, we don't automatically get free from desires there. We still have to get another body to work through those desires. Of course, it is all very entangling, and we usually forget about our suffering and go to hell again.

Lord Kapiladeva says, "If, therefore, the living entity again associates with the path of unrighteousness, influenced by sensually minded people engaged in the pursuit of sexual enjoyment and the gratification of the palate, he again goes to hell as before." The only solution is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and avoid wrestling with the tricky laws of *karma.*

* * *

Your recent eye-catching and mind-opening ads for *Back to Godhead, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and *Bhagavad-gītā* make for a real transcendental experience as I go through the magazine savoring every page. Looking forward to the arrival of the magazine has become a thrill. I have been wanting to write to you earlier, but my dear husband, Mohandas, was seriously ill. The last article he enjoyed utmost before he passed away was "Won't You Join the Dance?" [Vol. 23 No. 2-3] I eagerly await your magazine and depend on my devotee friends for spiritual strength.

Sarala Mohandas Baliga
Shippensburg, Pennsylvania

# HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA, KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE
# HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA, RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE

YAMARĀJA DĀSA

*Māyāpur, India, March 1985*

Tap into the reservoir of pleasure. By chanting the names of God, you'll immediately be in touch with the source of all pleasure. The name *Kṛṣṇa* means "the all-attractive person," and *Rāma* means "the supreme pleasure." *Hare* is a word addressing Harā, God's devotional energy, to whom we pray to be engaged in the Lord's service. Because God is unlimited and absolute, He is fully present in the sound of His names. So, just as darkness cannot stand in the presence of light, miseries cannot affect us when we chant God's names.

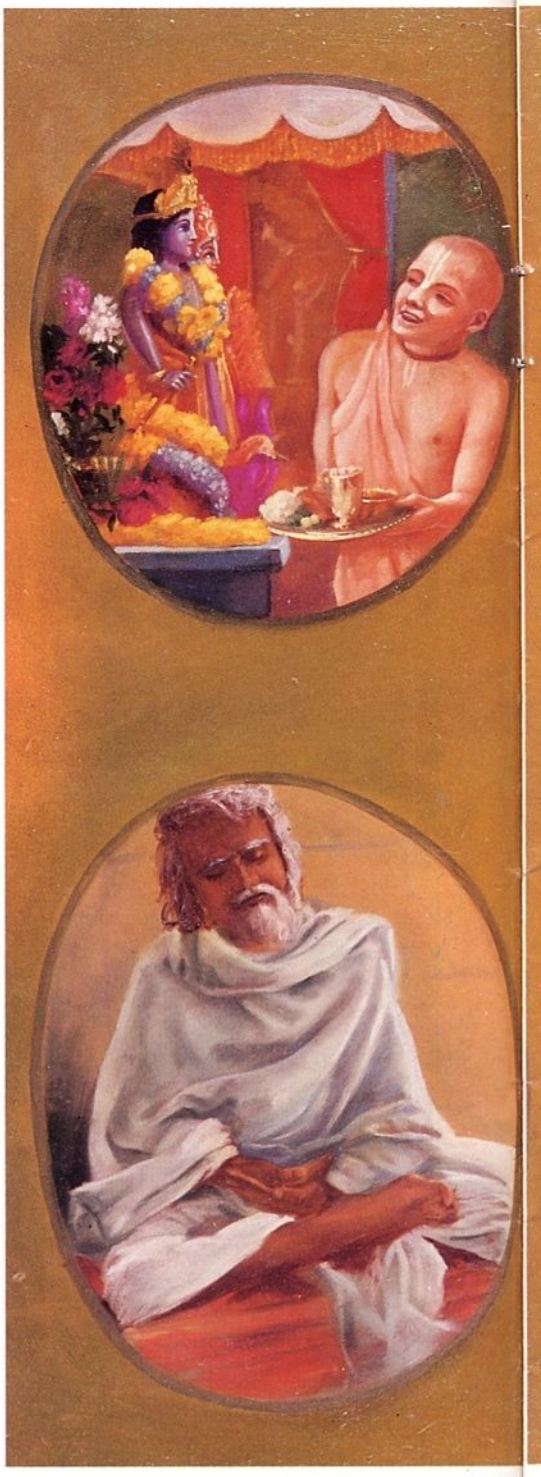
Because we are spiritual and eternal, our natural state is one of unrestricted happiness. But forgetting our original positions as loving servants and devotees of Kṛṣṇa, we suffer the pains of material life. By chanting God's names, we become purified of all material desires, which separate us from Kṛṣṇa, and we regain entrance into the eternal, blissful spiritual realm.

The spiritual realm is not restricted by time and space; it's always within reach. And you can experience it. Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*—and taste the pleasure.

# The Yoga Of Pleasing God

The *yoga* taught by Lord Caitanya is as easy as singing, dancing, and eating delicious food.

by KṚPĀKĀRA DĀSA



Nowadays when people think of *yoga,* they generally conjure up images of half-naked Indian *yogīs* with long hair and beards sitting in the lotus position in the Himalayas, or they might picture the familiar scene of people contorting their bodies into various postures at a *haṭha-yoga* studio. These popular images fall far short of the complete picture of *yoga* given in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna, His friend and disciple, in the various *yoga* systems.

The word *yoga,* the origin of "yoke," means to link with the Supreme. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa's purpose in outlining the various processes of *yoga* in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is to show Arjuna the ways in which different types of *yogīs* try to attain Him. Kṛṣṇa explains the four main types of *yoga: karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, dhyāna-yoga,* and *bhakti-yoga.*

The basic understanding of all *yogīs* is that actions in this world incur reactions that keep one bound up in material existence. Each type of *yoga* attempts in its own way to elevate the practitioner above *karma* and into the transcendental realm, where one can realize the Supreme.

*Karma-yoga* entails working in this world in an ordinary occupation but offering the fruit of one's labor to the Supreme Lord. By working for the Supreme in this way, one incurs no reaction for one's work, and through such selfless action, one will become purified and develop real, spiritual knowledge.

The cultivation of spiritual knowledge is known as *jñāna-yoga.* The *jñāna-yogī,* understanding the futility of working for material results, occupies himself with studying Vedānta, or Vedic philosophical works on the nature of the Absolute Truth.

*Dhyāna-yoga* is a mechanical process, divided into eight steps, that helps control the mind and senses with the aim of concentrating on the Lord in the heart. The bodily exercises people often equate with *yoga* are only one part of the bona fide system of *dhyāna-yoga,* which is very difficult to practice in this age. We may look spiritual with our long hair and beard, or we may become fit by the *yoga* exercises, but breath control and *yoga* postures alone will not bring us to the goal of *yoga.*

Many people who practice *yoga* today have no intention of making spiritual advancement. They simply want to improve their health or sexual abilities. And even if one is sincere, meditation even for short periods is extremely difficult in this age. To really perform *dhyāna-yoga,* one must be celibate, strictly control the mind, and refrain from all sensual activities.

The Vedic scriptures recommend that in this age everyone should practice *bhakti-yoga,* or devotional service to the Supreme Lord. *Bhakti-yoga* is in fact the goal of all *yoga* processes. In the *Gītā,* Lord Kṛṣṇa states that of all *yogīs,* one who is engaged in His service is the highest.

Lord Kṛṣṇa descended five hundred years ago as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to propagate *bhakti* in this age. Lord Caitanya introduced the essential element of *bhakti,* the chanting of the Lord's names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. *Bhakti-yoga* is based on this chanting. Other important aspects of *bhakti-yoga* include hearing the Lord's glories, remembering Him, offering Him prayers, and worshiping Him in His Deity form in the temple. Anyone in any condition of life can practice one or more aspects of *bhakti-yoga,* even while engaged in worldly responsibilities. A housewife, a businessman, or even a child can chant the names of the Supreme Lord and make spiritual progress. No wonder it is said in the scriptures that the demigods pray to take birth on earth in this age so that they may practice the easy process Lord Caitanya has given.

After Lord Caitanya's departure, His

Painting by Muralidhara dāsa © The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

principal disciples, the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, further expounded the science of *bhakti,* emphasizing the principle of *yukta-vairāgya,* or using everything of this world in the service of the Supreme Lord. Following this principle, one offers everything to the Lord for His pleasure and then enjoys His remnants as *prasādam,* or "mercy." Thus one's senses are not artificially restrained, but they are offered spiritual engagement. In *bhakti-yoga,* the devotee enjoys life by chanting, dancing, and eating sumptuous sanctified food. As the devotee works for Kṛṣṇa and hears more and more about Him, he begins to see Him in everything. He thus experiences a higher, spiritual pleasure in life. This is the beauty of *bhakti-yoga:* one can perform it while remaining in any position of life.

*Bhakti-yoga* must, however, be performed under the guidance of the bona fide spiritual master, one who knows the art of dovetailing activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Bhakti-yoga* is not unscientific or sentimental, as other *yoga* practitioners may suggest. It is appropriate for the modern age, and it has been carefully set down for our benefit in many exact spiritual literatures by the six Gosvāmīs and their followers. One of the Gosvāmīs' prominent followers is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, who has left a legacy of spiritual books. Though writing with the practical needs of modern society in mind, he in no way compromised the lofty principles of *yoga.* By a careful application of his relevant teachings, anyone can rise—even in this materialistic age—to the highest goal of life: Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

# IN THE FACE OF DANGER

The media's constant reminders of the unavoidable horrors of death give us legitimate cause for fear. How does a devotee of Kṛṣṇa react to the dangers of this world?

by HARIKEŚA SWAMI

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Fear: the emotion caused by the expectation of danger or unfavorable circumstances, or by the consideration that at any moment our material stability will crumble.

We are all familiar with the feeling of fear; it is as natural as eating, sleeping, or mating. Indeed, fear underlies the hundreds of arrangements we make daily to avoid expected pain. And why shouldn't we be afraid? After all, this world is a temporary, miserable place. Consider these pressing topics that dominate the news media: drought, car accidents, destruction of the ozone layer, increase in the world temperature, poisons in our food and air, wholesale slaughter at a weekend air show, AIDS . . .

As soon as we take birth, we carry with us the natural fear of death. For one who has taken birth, death is certain. No one can avoid it. Perhaps we are not always aware of the imminence of death, but an underlying fear of death dominates our lives. To understand that death is a major concern for all, one need only consider the vast network of social laws, medical care, safety regulations, and so on we have set up to protect ourselves from death.

And we fear for others' welfare as well. A mother's protective care of her child is an example of our natural fear for the safety and security of our loved ones. Of all forms of danger, death is the most mysterious and therefore the

ILLUSTRATION BY KEŚĪSŪDANA DĀSA

cause of the greatest fear. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that we have died—or changed our bodies—at the end of each of our many lives within this material world. By nature's arrangement, however, we have forgotten the experience of death, and thus it remains a great, unknown, fearful event.

Yet since the problem of death is unsolvable, we tend to put it aside with a fatalistic shrug: "I can't do anything about it anyway, so what's the use of worrying about it now?" Once Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the great emperor of the world during the time of Kṛṣṇa's appearance, was asked to describe the most wonderful thing he had ever seen. His answer was simply "Although everyone has seen that his father has died, his grandfather has died, and his great-grandfather has also died, he thinks that he will never die." Since we are *eternal* spirit souls, we cannot die, but as long as we are ignorant of this fact, there is no avoiding the danger of death.

The attempt to ignore death does not really salve our consciousness. The media's daily presentation of the theme of violent or catastrophic death underlines man's conscious and unconscious preoccupation with his own demise. The news magazines' main business is to sell their product. What better way than through the presentation of themes that are simultaneously shocking and yet deeply relevant? Striking deep into our psyche, the news media probe our own convictions that death is an unavoidable horror. Feeding off our hidden paranoia, the media's reportage of the misfortunes of others acts to stir up wonder within our hearts.

Sometimes we try to take shelter in the understanding that the reported events are not directly affecting us and therefore are not to be feared. Unfortunately, such rationalizations are not sufficient to conquer all fearful situations. Who can say that the destruction of the environment is someone else's problem? Cancer, heart disease, and other modern ailments of the body or mind are very real dangers that likely will soon become part of our lives. If someone in our family becomes afflicted by disease, his suffering pains us as well. And since many diseases are inherited, the suffering of our parents or grandparents may be a warning indicator pointing to our own future distress.

The major problems of the world also affect each of us. The severe droughts, eroding ice caps, thinning ozone layer, and the famous AIDS virus—all burden our consciousness with more nagging doubts about our own capacity to survive. There is no use trying to hide on an island of self-created security, for the troubles of the world become our own sooner or later.

The Vedic literature speaks about fear as one of the basic ingredients of material life. Whether one be a bird, beast, worm, insect, fish, human being, or something higher, fear of death, fear of pain, fear of loss, and hundreds of other fears constantly plague our lives. Franklin Roosevelt once tried to soothe the minds of those distressed by the economic conditions of the Great Depression by telling them, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." Such positive words may pacify those who ascribe to the philosophy that ignorance is bliss, but for the rest of us there seem to be an awful lot of other things to be feared as well. Or as another political pundit remarked, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're *not* out to get you!" In other words, there is more to fear than fear itself, since there are actually dangerous conditions brewing that could cause our personal or collective destruction.

*We may try to forget the problems of life through the various forms of intoxicant freely available in modern society, but we are invariably rudely awakened by the next disaster reported in the media.*

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states, *padaṁ padaṁ yad vipadām:* "There is danger at every step." No one can say that he will live forever, and no one can guarantee himself a painless life. Money cannot solve all problems; even opulent paranoiacs like Howard Hughes have to die. Fear follows us like our shadow. And like our shadow, sometimes we are aware of it, and other times we choose to ignore it. One may ignore his death, his old age, or his disease, but these facts of life do not ignore us. One may be forgetful of his appointment in court or his payments to the bank, but the harsh reminder of reality soon comes in the form of law enforcement. We may attempt to forget the problems of life through the various forms of intoxicant freely available in modern society, but we are invariably rudely awakened by the next disaster reported in the media.

One may try to avoid fear by considering it simply a mental concoction or the product of a deranged mind. Going to a psychologist to learn the art of facing fear with some attitude of detached resignation will not solve the problems of life. Despite our mental situation, disease is disease, old age old age, and death the invariable end. One may temporarily succeed in forgetting the fearful conditions, but as soon as they begin to cause trouble, the suffering is the same. Everyone becomes at least somewhat fearful during periods of pain. The conclusion is that as long as one remains within the confines of the materialistic mentality, fear will be a constant factor in life.

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa, on the other hand, are trained to understand the root cause of fear and thus are given a means to conquer fear at its source. Most devotees join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement with a good understanding of the problems of the material world. Indeed, most join because they understand that there is no material solution to the many problems of life. Vivid worldly experiences help us understand the indications of the Vedic literatures. By reading the words of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* we come to realize that fear is part of material existence. It arises from our false conception of our own identity and of our relationship with this world.

Surely a fearful situation stirs up emotions within the body of a devotee, but a devotee relates to these material reflexes in a Kṛṣṇa conscious manner. Therefore, even if faced with his own violent death, he can climb out of the deep well of horror and remain determined that he will serve Kṛṣṇa even in his next life. It has been seen over the last twenty-odd years in ISKCON that sometimes a devotee will die unexpectedly, perhaps in an automobile accident. But because a devotee knows there is danger at every step, he responds to danger by taking shelter in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Although the adrenalin level in his body surely increases proportionately to the dangers facing him, his consciousness remains fixed in the conviction that Kṛṣṇa will carry him over this danger. Even if the devotee dies in some unexpected way, Kṛṣṇa, being kind upon His dear servant, brings him back to His own spiritual abode. Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.5), "And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body remembering Me alone at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt."

In one sense fear is a state of mind. Factually there is nothing to fear, since Kṛṣṇa guarantees protection to all souls surrendered to Him. For one who knows that the body is temporary and the soul eternal, what meaning does death have? For him, death is simply a change of dress. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that one who learns the art of depending on Kṛṣṇa

(*continued on page 28*)

# Godhead Is Light.

"The process of going back home, back to Godhead, is to hear about the Supreme Lord and His name, form, attributes, pastimes, paraphernalia, and variegatedness. Foolish people do not know this. They want to hear something about the name, form, etc., of everything temporary, and they do not know how to utilize this propensity of hearing for the ultimate good."

—From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.2, purport) by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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# "I Blindly Follow My Guru"

But that doesn't mean I renounce common sense or ignore the strict spiritual system of checks and balances.

by ROHIṆĪNANDANA DĀSA

Every morning in each Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, devotees assemble to hear the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. As we gradually make our way through the different volumes, we cover a wide variety of topics related to spiritual life. One day a speaker was reluctant to read the verse and purport because he felt they were unsuitable for the youngsters present. We were reading the Fifth Canto, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī was describing various sexual deviations and their hellish results. Some devotees favored continuing, while others wanted to skip a few verses.

One devotee reminded everyone of Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire that children also hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He further qualified his opinion by saying (seemingly self-righteously), "You may have your ideas, but *I blindly follow my* guru."

Knowing this phrase and its connotations to be the cause of some doubt to many persons interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I began reflecting upon what it means to "blindly" follow one's *guru*. Many times, usually after explaining the relationship between *guru* and disciple, we are asked, "But do you mean to say that the disciple is supposed to do *everything* the *guru* asks?" At this point it becomes apparent that the questioner is entertaining mental visions of the worst kind—subservient, starry-eyed disciples begging pennies on a street corner for yet another Rolls-Royce for their *guru*. Or worse still—scenes of a large commune where hundreds of bewildered followers blindly take their own lives at the whimsical demand of their now insane leader. How does the acceptance of a genuine spiritual master, with the implicit faith and service attitude this entails, differ from the naive submission and consequent exploitation often involved in other "spiritual" relationships?

To my mind, the question is not whether we are prepared to do anything the *guru* asks of us, but whether a soul surrendered to his *guru* has, or retains, any intelligence, discrimination, or free will. "Blind" following can be the cause of perfection or havoc, depending on how it is understood.

*A Lesson from the* Mahābhārata

In the *Mahābhārata* (the history of greater India), there is an interesting incident concerning Arjuna, the perfect disciple, and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and perfect *guru*. During the Battle of Kurukṣetra, King Yudhiṣṭhira was severely defeated in single combat with Karṇa and retreated from the battlefield to rest. Upon hearing of Yudhiṣṭhira's serious wounds, Arjuna was worried and ordered Kṛṣṇa to take his chariot to his brother's tent. Yudhiṣṭhira was suffering intense pain, fatigue, shame, and anxiety because of the superior strength of Karṇa. All his hope for victory lay in Arjuna, but he was afraid that even Arjuna did not possess the ability to defeat such a strong enemy.

When Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa entered the tent, Yudhiṣṭhira assumed that Karṇa must have been killed, because Arjuna was known as Vijaya—"one who never leaves the battlefield without defeating his enemy." Relieved of his fear, Yudhiṣṭhira rose up on his bed and began to glorify Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa. After some

**On the order of his *guru*** that he preach in the West, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda boards the *Jaladuta* in Calcutta a few days before his seventieth birthday to begin a one-month voyage to America.

ILLUSTRATION BY RĀMADĀSA ABHIRĀMA DĀSA AND DHṚTI-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

moments, Arjuna explained the actual situation: he had left the battlefield out of concern for Yudhiṣṭhira.

Immediately the pressure felt by Yudhiṣṭhira exploded in a torrent of disappointment and bitter regret. He cursed Arjuna and accused him of being a hero in name only. He said that Arjuna was unfit to carry such a powerful weapon as the famed Gāṇḍīva bow. He told him that he should give it to a warrior who could wield it more effectively.

Arjuna reacted by fiercely unsheathing his sword, but Lord Kṛṣṇa stopped him with His hand and inquired, "How is it that you are about to attack your older brother?" Arjuna replied with a warrior's pride, "O Kṛṣṇa, I have a secret vow that I will immediately slay anyone who suggests that I give up my Gāṇḍīva bow to another."

Lord Kṛṣṇa reasoned, "Arjuna, how can you kill your king and older brother, decorated as he is with all saintly qualities, just because of a few words spoken in anxiety, frustration, and anger?"

"But Kṛṣṇa," Arjuna objected, "what about my vow?" Kṛṣṇa answered, "You are a fool, for you do not know how to properly apply religious principles. Do not be a fanatic, but consider the time and circumstance."

*Ferocious Bandits*

Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna a story: There was once a saint who made the solemn vow to never tell a lie. One day some innocent people came by his *āśrama* fleeing from a gang of ferocious bandits. The bandits soon arrived and demanded, "Did you see them? Which way did they go?" The saint honestly pointed to the citizens' hiding place. The dacoits then butchered the defenseless people and took away their wealth. As a result of his blind foolishness, the saint had to suffer for the sufferings he had callously caused. Therefore a person must have proper discrimination when applying the principles of religion; the subtleties of the rules of honesty, ethics, morality, and nonviolence are sometimes difficult to discern.

Arjuna was relieved to hear Kṛṣṇa's brilliant judgment, but still he could not forget his vow. Again Lord Kṛṣṇa helped him out: "There are various kinds of deaths according to scripture," He continued. "One form of death is for a superior person to be insulted and dishonored by his junior."

Arjuna took the hint and began to revile Yudhiṣṭhira for his attachment to gambling and his lack of *kṣatriya* (warrior) qualities. He blamed him for the whole war. Because Yudhiṣṭhira was a humble devotee, he already felt guilty for the mass killing. He meekly listened to Arjuna's rebukes. Arjuna, his anger expended, then fell at his brother's feet and begged forgiveness. They warmly embraced, realizing how Kṛṣṇa had saved them yet again.

Previously, when Kṛṣṇa had spoken the *Bhagavad-gītā,* He had tried to convince Arjuna that his duty—and therefore the topmost morality for him—was to fight and kill. In this instance, however, Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna differently. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme autocrat, we see that He always instructs according to reason and scriptural evidence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to use their discrimination. He would often ask their opinion before making a decision, and he would sometimes challenge their convictions: "Why do you say Kṛṣṇa is God? How do you know? What's wrong with not being Kṛṣṇa conscious?"

Sometimes he would take the role of an atheist or coax a disciple to do so. He would argue with logic and common sense. He wouldn't accept answers like "So-and-so said" or "It says in the scripture." He wanted us to know exactly why we do what we do and say what we say.

*After one has ascertained that a spiritual teacher is bona fide, one must eventually take initiation. The spiritual master is Kṛṣṇa's representative and should therefore be accepted to be as good as God.*

Śrīla Prabhupāda often told us to "do the needful." The needful, however, will inevitably vary according to different situations. Śrīla Prabhupāda often demonstrated that preaching is a higher principle than an inflexible attachment to rules and regulations. There are as many different situations as waves in the ocean, and each requires Kṛṣṇa conscious consideration. Witlessly brandishing dogma is not conducive to progress.

To have blind faith in one's *guru* is required, but such faith should not encourage foolish loyalty to persons like Bhīṣma and Droṇa, who had chosen the side of irreligion. Arjuna's blind faith in them was a barrier impeding the correct course of action.

Faith is obviously an essential ingredient for any endeavor, especially in spiritual life. The *guru* teaches his students about transcendental subjects inaccessible to the material mind and senses. After one has thoroughly ascertained, by using a high degree of intelligent discrimination, that a spiritual teacher is bona fide, one must eventually take initiation. The spiritual master is Lord Kṛṣṇa's representative and should therefore be accepted to be as good as God. A disciple who has implicit faith in the scriptures and the words of his *guru* will realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The disciple has to surrender his will to that of his *guru,* just as after accepting a person as your doctor, you have to be obedient to his commands. Spiritual life means to surrender your soul, or your self, to the shelter and guidance of your spiritual master.

*Checks and Balances*

Now, although we have to surrender to the spiritual master, are there any checks and balances by which we can protect ourselves from possible exploitation from unscrupulous "*gurus*"? Let us carefully consider: In everyday life the spiritual master does not baffle his disciple with apparent contradictions. But there are concepts presented by the *guru* that may contradict the disciple's ideas, conditioning, or even sensory perception. Our background is materialistic and often atheistic. We are prone to be rebellious toward the authority of the Supreme Lord, and we are full of the four defects of conditioned life: we make mistakes, we're illusioned, we have a tendency to cheat, and we have imperfect senses. So it's not surprising if the *guru* says things that contradict our preconceived opinions.

The real qualification of the *guru* is that he speaks according to *guru, śāstra,* and *sādhu.* These are the checks and balances of the system of receiving transcendental knowledge. *"Guru"* means that the *guru* must always speak in line with his own *guru.* In London, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that it's not difficult to be a *guru.* All we have to do is follow our *guru's* instructions, repeat his message, and not become proud. *"Sādhu"* means authorized saintly persons, past and present. And *"śāstra"* means the genuine scriptures.

If a *guru* appears to make a statement or give an order contrary to any of these principles, the disciple may inquire, "My dear spiritual master, I cannot understand your statement; please explain it according to the principles of *guru, śāstra,* and *sādhu.*" In an extreme case, Bali Mahārāja attained perfection by refusing to follow his *guru's* order that he not surrender to Lord Viṣṇu. The *Mahābhārata* enjoins us to reject a *guru* who does not know what is to be done or not to be done. It is the duty of a disciple to bring up any doubts he has. Many times in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna

says things like "This is my doubt, O Kṛṣṇa, and I ask you to dispel it completely." It's the duty of an expert *guru* to dispel every doubt of his disciple.

If a disciple does something against the principles of *guru, sādhu,* and *śāstra* and tries to justify his misdemeanor by saying "My *guru* told me to do it," his action is no less censurable. A *guru* who fell down from the principles of spiritual life began to urge his disciples to take drugs along with the chanting of the holy names for "better results." His sincere and intelligent disciples refused to follow such an erroneous order, but those who took spiritual life cheaply or who were blind sentimentalists eagerly began abusing their bodies and minds with different kinds of drugs, pretending that it was all spiritual. Some of them even said, "I'll follow my *guru* to hell," forgetting that the purpose of accepting a *guru* is to go back to Godhead. Their position was as foolish as that of a demented patient who declares, "I don't care if my doctor is going to cause my disease to increase; I'll still follow his direction." A sincere disciple may be prepared to go to hell with his *guru*—but to preach, not as an inmate!

Now let us consider the place for blind faith and blind following. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, told Śrīla Prabhupāda on different occasions to preach in the West. He said it would be good for him and good for those to whom he preached. He also instilled in Śrīla Prabhupāda the importance of book distribution. He had a vision for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and Śrīla Prabhupāda meticulously followed his order. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say, "Whatever success may come is due to my Guru Mahārāja—I blindly follow his order."

Blind faith means not to allow material considerations to interfere with the order of one's *guru.* The story of the printing of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* by Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples (described in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta,* Volume 6) serves as a striking illustration. When Śrīla Prabhupāda ordered his disciples at the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust to print seventeen books in two months, they initially replied that it was an impossible task. Śrīla Prabhupāda chided, "*Impossible* is a word found in a fool's dictionary." So they set to work, fully enlivened by the powerful order of their spiritual master. When the huge task was completed in the allotted time, everyone knew that both the order and its execution were the causeless mercy of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee.

The *guru* is the representative of the Supreme Lord, who is the source of all intelligence, and so it is not surprising for a sincere and dedicated disciple to feel and realize the *guru's* divine grace. Blind

(*continued on page 22*)

# *Cooking with* KŪRMA

Amogha dāsa

Based on the three-part videotape series *Cooking With Kūrma,* produced by ISKCON Television (ITV), this column features the gourmet recipes and authentic Indian techniques of ISKCON's famous Australian chef Kūrma dāsa.

## Chickpeas and Potatoes in Coconut-Yogurt Sauce

(Serves 5-6)

**Ingredients**

1¼ cups chickpeas
1½ teaspoons cumin seeds
2 teaspoons coriander seeds
8 black peppercorns
1 tablespoon poppy seeds
½ teaspoon fennel
1 cup plain yogurt
1 tablespoon minced green chilies
½ tablespoon minced fresh ginger root
1 cup shredded coconut
¼ cup water
ghee (clarified butter) or oil for deep-frying
2 medium baking potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 tablespoons ghee or oil
1¼ teaspoons black mustard seeds
6–8 curry leaves
1¼ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon turmeric
2 tablespoons fresh parsley or coriander

1. Soak the chickpeas overnight; then boil them until they're butter soft.
2. Dry-roast the cumin seeds, coriander seeds, peppercorns, poppy seeds, and fennel for 5 to 10 minutes, until they're aromatic and golden brown. Blend in an electric blender until powdered. Add the yogurt, chilies, ginger, coconut, and the water. Blend until smooth.
3. Deep-fry the potato cubes until brown. Meanwhile, heat the two tablespoons of ghee in a large pan and add the mustard seeds. When they pop, add the curry leaves, salt, and turmeric. Sauté for a few minutes until brown. Add the chickpeas, stir, and add the yogurt mixture. Cook on a high flame until thick. Turn down the flame. Add the cooked potatoes, mix well, and garnish with the parsley or coriander. Offer to Kṛṣṇa.

Puruṣārtha dāsa

Painting by Muralidhara dāsa © The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

## Lord Kṛṣṇa's Energies

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.4, 5), "Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight constitute My separated material energies. Besides these, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is another, superior energy of Mine, which comprises the living entities who are exploiting the resources of this material, inferior nature." Here the body represents the material universe of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. The red dot on the forehead represents the subtle body of mind, intelligence, and false ego. The soul, accompanied by the Supersoul (an expansion of Kṛṣṇa), is seated in the heart of the gross body.

# Supreme Authority

(*continued from page 4*)

understand what this body is and who the proprietor of this body is, then our knowledge is perfect.

Kṛṣṇa says that one proprietor of this body is the soul, but that there is another proprietor. For example, there is an occupier of a house and also an owner. There are so many tenants in every apartment house in Bombay, but there is also a proprietor of each house. Similarly, in this body we are not actually the proprietor: we are simply the occupier.

Suppose I give you my motorcar to use. You are not the proprietor: you are the occupier, or driver. The owner is different. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa says, *kṣetra-jñaṁ cāpi māṁ viddhi:* "Indirectly I am the proprietor of the body." That is why Kṛṣṇa's name is Hṛṣīkeśa. *Hṛṣīka* means "senses," and *īśa* means "controller." This body is made of senses, and the actual proprietor of the senses is Kṛṣṇa, Hṛṣīkeśa.

We are given our senses to use. For example, we are using our hand. But if the hand is paralyzed for some reason or other, we cannot repair it. This is not possible. Because the proprietor has withdrawn the power of the hand to act, it is no longer workable, although I may claim that it is my hand. Actually, it is not my hand; it is Kṛṣṇa's hand. That is knowledge. As long as we are thinking "I am this body" or "This is my body," we are not in perfect knowledge. When you understand that your body is actually Kṛṣṇa's body, then you are in perfect knowledge.

It is not that Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of only the human bodies. There are 8,400,000 different types of body, and Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of every one of them. That is also explained in the Fourteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* [14.4]: *sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya . . . aham bīja-pradaḥ pitā.* "I am the seed-giving father in all species of life." The father gives the seed, and the mother gives the body. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa, the supreme father, has given the seed of every living being, and material nature has supplied the body.

So, Kṛṣṇa has given us this body through the agency of material nature. This body is just like a machine (*yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*). We are seated in this machine, and we are traveling under the influence of *māyā,* Kṛṣṇa's illusory energy. We are wandering throughout the whole creation. Sometimes we are getting a human body, sometimes the body of a demigod, sometimes the body of a rich man, sometimes the body of a poor man, sometimes the body of a cat, sometimes a dog, sometimes a tree, a plant, or an aquatic. This is our position.

Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.13], *dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā/ tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ:* "As we are changing our body at every moment—from childhood to boyhood, from boyhood to youth, and from youth to old age—we similarly get another body at death." But we do not know that we are going to get another body in our next life. We think that this body is all in all—that there is no rebirth.

Therefore the knowledge contained in *Bhagavad-gītā* is required—how we have gotten this body, and how we can get a better body in our next life. This is real knowledge, not the knowledge of how to eat, how to sleep, and how to have sex. That knowledge is there in the animals (*āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maithunaṁ ca*). Where to find one's food, where to sleep, how to have sex, how to defend oneself—these things animals also know. So if we devote our time only to these four principles of bodily want, then we are no better than the cats and dogs.

Real knowledge begins when I know what I am, what this body is, and why I am suffering. We should ask, "I want to be

(*continued on page 28*)

## ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA

### The Original Manifestation of God

by Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa,
I appreciate the prayers of *all*
Your sincere devotees,
who address you as "most high,
all-powerful good Lord,"
and who address You by many titles
such as God, Creator,
Jehovah, Allah,
Brahmā, Viṣṇu and so on,
and who approach You through many mediums,
such as the son of God, the prophet, or the *guru.*

Out of the multi-addresses and many appearances
and manifestations of Yourself,
I have become most fortunate to see You
and worship You, and call upon You
as Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I pray to You as Kṛṣṇa
because the name *Kṛṣṇa* means "all-attractive,"
and because in Your form of Kṛṣṇa,
You offer the most intimate exchanges of love
with Your best devotees.
Besides, my spiritual master has taught me
according to the Vedic scriptures,
*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam.*
Chanting Your names
is the only remedy for those
who are rotting here in birth and death.

Dear Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa,
I pray for connection and Your grace
so that I may actually praise You
for Your pleasure
and the pleasure of my Guru Mahārāja.

*This series systematically explains some of the important philosophical concepts that form the foundation of the Vedic culture and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.*

# LESSON THREE: Reincarnation

by PAVANEŚANA DĀSA

**PART II:** Lord Kṛṣṇa explains reincarnation in the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.13): "As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death." Each of us once had the body of a baby, and now we have the body of an adult. But these two bodies are entirely different. They don't look alike, and all the chemical ingredients have changed. Nonetheless, our mothers still know us as the same person.

When we are thirty or forty years older, again our body will look different. But we will remain the same person. So what is it that remains the same? It is our real self, the spirit soul. In this way we can observe reincarnation

to a certain extent even in this lifetime.

When a person dies, we generally say, "He's gone," even if he's lying right next to us. Why do we say he's gone? Who has gone? And where has he gone? Because the body is still lying there, we should understand that it is the soul that has left. The person we thought we knew was never identical with his body. In fact, no one had ever seen the real person.

A beautiful actress may be adored by millions, but as soon as she is dead, no one will be attracted to her, although her body still looks the same. Obviously, her body was not the real object of attraction.

Even if you try to inject certain missing chemicals into the body, you can never make it alive again once the soul is gone. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.20, 22),

> For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.
>
> As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

Now, a scientist or a hard-core materialist may ask, "But where is the evidence for the soul and reincarnation? No one has ever observed these directly."

This challenge presumes that all scientific "facts" have been directly observed. This, of course, is not true. Millions of children are taught that life comes from matter, that it all started with the "big bang" or the "primordial soup." Then by chance, chemicals began to organize themselves and gradually evolved into the highly sophisticated human form.

We can confidently state that no one has ever observed this process, since supposedly it took place before any human observers existed, and certainly no one lives the billions of years necessary to witness such a process. The theories that life has evolved from chemicals have never been proven. No one has ever observed matter producing life.

We can, however, observe daily how living creatures produce matter: hair, perspiration, fingernails, and so on. Therefore, reincarnation is more compatible with observable phenomena than is the theory of chemical evolution. Matter is clearly dependent on spirit. We *can* see the body changing while the person remains the same, and we *can* see life producing matter.

Misled by theories of modern science, people have no knowledge of the soul and the universal laws of reincarnation. They think that death is the end of our existence, and that therefore we should try to enjoy this life as much as possible. This kind of philosophy encourages cruelty, selfishness, crime, and irresponsibility. People don't know that while they may get away with cheating worldly authorities, and in this way avoid reactions for their activities, they cannot escape the subtle law that every action produces a reaction.

Understanding reincarnation can inspire us to lead more responsible lives of morality, honesty, and love for our fellow human beings, because we know that we will be held responsible for our activities in our next life.

Reincarnation explains many puzzling phenomena. For example, how was Mozart able to melt people's hearts with his piano playing when he was only five years old, whereas someone else cannot play nicely despite many years of practice? The answer is simple: Mozart had been practicing in at least one lifetime before.

This argument may not be strictly scientific, but it makes more sense than to say that our abilities come about by chance. Of course, some people refuse to accept reincarnation without empirical proof. To this we can say that reincarnation is not something that can be verified in a laboratory. Many other accepted phenomena cannot be explained that way either. Love, remorse, resentment, altruism—these cannot be verified in the laboratory, but we all know they exist.

To flatly reject reincarnation is a dogmatic attitude. At least a person should admit that he simply doesn't know whether it exists or not. After all, there is no proof that it does not exist.

If a materialist takes the chance of living a life against universal laws, against the injunctions of holy scriptures, against the advice of self-realized persons, he runs the risk of having to take birth as an animal or in some other undesirable circumstances. And even if everything is finished at death, he cannot guarantee that he will be happy by living irresponsibly, with no concern for his future life.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (16.23) Lord Kṛṣṇa gives this advice:

> He who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.

A devotee, however, cannot lose. If reincarnation is a fact, he is assured of a better destination in the next life. And even if reincarnation were not true, the life of a devotee is still a happy life.

Besides these considerations, devotees understand that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a spiritual science that enables one to realize the truth of the philosophy. By practicing *bhakti-yoga,* the devotee becomes free of all doubts concerning the nature of the soul and its activities. And his realizations are confirmed by the authoritative Vedic scriptures and the testimonies of thousands of great saints and sages.

Human life is a crossroads, a chance to either elevate or degrade ourselves. After millions of births in lower species, it is the greatest misfortune to spoil the unique opportunity human life awards us: to once and for all stop the cycle of birth and death and attain our original, blissful position in the spiritual world.

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# "I Blindly Follow"

(*continued from page 17*)

following means, therefore, that your undaunted eyes are fully open, but you're not proud of your achievements, thinking you have greater vision than your *guru.*

In fact, pride, familiarity, and consequent negligence in executing the directions of the spiritual master are serious impediments to spiritual advancement. To protect us, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "A disciple should always remain a fool before his spiritual master." But Śrīla Prabhupāda also expected his disciples to behave intelligently and with common sense. Therefore, just as a disciple should feel like—but not be—a fool, he should follow his *guru* blindly but not be blind.

So we should use our brains and not dogmatically say "So-and-so said" as an absolute truth in every circumstance. Should a child listen to the unpleasant descriptions in the Fifth Canto? Well, the general principle is that everyone should hear the *Bhāgavatam* because it is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the form of sound, but there's still room for some discrimination.

In a lecture in 1972, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that originally all Vedic literature was especially meant to instruct those men who would disseminate the information to others in a manner suitable to their understanding. When instructing others, sensitivity and tact are obviously required. Not everything said bluntly to an adult should be repeated verbatim to a child. Otherwise, in the name of religion, a child's rights to develop as a balanced, mature individual may be violated. Because of a clumsy or opinionated presentation, the child may end up with the impression, for example, that all sex is abominable, resulting in hell, or that sex means the abominable sex described in the Fifth Canto. Who knows what lasting impression will come to his mind?

Śrīla Prabhupāda has said, "A devotee is as thoughtful as a nondevotee is speculative." We should present the truth according to our own realization, giving due consideration to the audience and the circumstances.

# Every Town And Village

The worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

## Devotees Host Religious Freedom Conference

**San Diego**—Devotees and scholars convened here recently for a two-day conference on religious freedom, called "Cultures in Conflict: the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement in America."

Amarendra dāsa, of the ISKCON Office of Legal Affairs, and Mukunda Goswami, ISKCON's minister of public affairs, organized the conference to publicize the *George* v. *ISKCON* case. Larry Shinn, author of *The Dark Lord* and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Bucknell University, was the keynote speaker.

*Dr. Larry Shinn gives the opening address at the ISKCON-sponsored religious freedom conference in San Diego.*

The first topic of the conference was "Views from Within." Speakers included Ravīndra-svarūpa dāsa (Ph.D.), ISKCON's Governing Body Commission chairman for 1988; Bhakti Svarūpa Dāmodara Swami (Ph.D.), director of the Bhaktivedanta Institute; and Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami.

Other topics were ISKCON's academic contribution and freedom of religion. Professors, attorneys, and psychologists talked about America's tradition of religious tolerance and the anticult movement's interest in the *George* v. *ISKCON* case.

A press conference on the first day resulted in newspaper, TV, and radio coverage. An article in the *San Diego Tribune* quoted Dr. Shinn: "Courts are allowing psychiatrists to tell us what religion is." The *San Diego Union* carried his statement that "Religious freedom is being sacrificed to the psychology of fear."

## Indian Government Donates Land to ISKCON

**Bangalore, Karnataka**—Devotees here recently consecrated newly acquired land given by the Karnataka government. Governor Sri P. Venkatasubaiah addressed the assembled guests at the ceremony.

The Karnataka government allotted the six-and-a-half-acre parcel to ISKCON to establish the Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Cultural Center and Educational Complex. Madhu Paṇḍita dāsa, temple president in Bangalore, said, "After ISKCON's ten years in the city, the new land provides us a great opportunity to expand our activities here."

The picturesque land is on a hill within the city. The planned cultural/educational center will include a temple, school, guesthouse, and marriage hall, and will preserve the natural woodlands, parks, and waterfalls.

Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, the presiding Deities of the Bangalore temple, rode in a Ratha-yātrā procession to the land, where a week-long festival took place.

## BI Lectures on Indian Campuses

**Bombay**—Bhaktivedanta Institute (BI) members Rāsarāja dāsa and Rājahaṁsa dāsa have been to the top universities throughout India, giving a series of lectures on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The program began in October 1987, when the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, invited devotees to hold their Bhāgavata Science Series.

The series includes four lectures: "Causality and Change," an analysis of modern science; "Can Machines Think?" a critique of artificial intelligence; "Matter and Antimatter," an explanation of consciousness; and "Meditation for the Modern Age," an introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā* and the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

During the four-day seminar, devotees sold hundreds of books published by BI and the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Seeing the overwhelmingly positive response, the institute invited the devotees back. The second lecture series included "Concepts of Time and Space," covering Vedic physics; "Introduction to Vedic Cosmology," explaining Vedic astronomy; and "God and His Energies," more studies from *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Rāsarāja, a Ph.D. chemist, and Rājahaṁsa decided to take the series to other Indian universities. Through the year, they lectured in India's prominent scientific institutes, including IIT, Kanpur; IIT, New Delhi; the National Physical Laboratory (where 150 scientists attended a one-day seminar); Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Birla Institute of Science and Technology, Pilani; the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; and other colleges in Bombay.

At each engagement devotees sold hundreds of books, circulated questionnaires to participants, and received many positive responses.

They accumulated five thousand names for the BI mailing list. Some seminar participants report that they now chant regularly, and three colleges have started *Bhagavad-gītā* clubs.

In Madras, Rāsarāja and Rājahaṁsa addressed another concern: "Value Education," or ethics. Worried about the moral decline of Indian schoolchildren, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad invited Rāsarāja and Rājahaṁsa to address a gathering of 120 high school principals and moral science teachers. The VHP wanted a way to present Vedic philosophy in the context of Western empirical science, since Indian law prohibits religion in public schools.

The main thrust of the one-day workshop was to enable teachers to see how religious knowledge can be scientifically taught. The teachers responded positively and asked the devotees to design a curriculum for moral education. The Bhaktivedanta Institute of Bombay is working on a book called *Morals in the Age of Science,* which will be part of the curriculum.

# NEWS BRIEFS

The ISKCON Office for Soviet and East European Affairs announced that fifty-four devotees from the Soviet Union have received permission to travel to India to attend this year's Vṛndāvana-Māyāpur festival. The Soviet devotees will travel from Moscow to Calcutta dressed in *dhotīs* and *sārīs*. Kīrtirāja dāsa of the Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas said, "After experiencing such repression and persecution at the hands of the Soviet authorities, the devotees never dreamed it possible that they could go to India for the festival." Indian press, radio, and television will greet the devotees when they arrive in Calcutta.

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Devotees in Durban, South Africa, were honored by the South African Red Cross Society for their assistance during the devastating floods there last year. At a presentation ceremony, Indradyumna Swami accepted a certificate that expressed "the warmest thanks for the valuable services rendered to the cause of humanity." The devotees worked tirelessly every day for more than a month, distributing a total of thirty thousand meals to the areas most affected by the floods.

•

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Saṅkīrtana Pada-yātrā is attending the Kumbha-melā in Allahabad, India, during January and February. By the time the great religious festival is over, as many as twenty million people will have attended. ISKCON has set up a camp at the fair, and devotees from around the world are chanting, preaching, and distributing *prasādam* and Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

•

With a $2 million grant from the Dutch government and $400,000 from the Rotary International Club, the Bhaktivedanta Institute is directing a large-scale health care project in the tribal areas of the Vishakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh, India. Working with Hare Krishna Food For Life, the Institute hopes to eradicate goiter, anemia, and night blindness in these areas, where the incidence of these diseases is near fifty percent.

•

In January, a hundred ISKCON devotees from India and elsewhere held a 500-kilometer *pada-yātrā* (walking pilgrimage) in the northeastern states of India, including Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Tripura. The aim of the *pada-yātrā* was to promote peace by encouraging people to take up *sanātana-dharma,* or service to the Supreme Lord, as the prime duty of life.

## Festivals & Calendar

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

**Month of Govinda**
(February 21–March 22)

**March 4**—Vijayā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

**March 6**—Śrī Śiva-rātri (appearance anniversary of Lord Śiva).

**March 8**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, the great devotee in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

**March 18**—Āmalakī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

**March 19**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

**March 22**—Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by feasting.

# RESOURCES

**Plain living, high thinking.** Get out of the city—away from the noise, pollution, and the anxiety and madness of city life. Come back to a simpler, more natural way of life. Live close to the earth, close to God. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has thirty-four farm communities throughout the world. These are sacred places where your spirit can unfold. And at the same time, they're realistic, practical places, where you can build a sane, stable life for yourself and, if you're married, for your family.

To find out more, get in touch with the ISKCON farm community nearest you.

**Own a full set of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.** Now you can have a full library of the Vedic classics in your home. Translated and explained by the world's foremost scholar and devotee, these books open up new realms of spiritual life. Each book is a deluxe, beautifully illustrated hardbound volume. And now we make it far easier for you than ever before to get a full set of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. For details, write to the *Back to Godhead* circulation office listed on page one.

**Note to Subscribers.** Planning to move? Let us know when and where so we can keep your BACK TO GODHEAD coming without a break.

Book Section

# ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the "cream of the Vedic literatures" of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## Third Canto: "The Status Quo"

### CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
### Conversation Between Manu and Kardama

*In this installment of our continuing presentation of* Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *the sage Maitreya begins describing to Vidura, a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the activities of the progenitor Kardama Muni.*

**TEXT 5**

रुचिर्यो भगवान् ब्रह्मन्दक्षो वा ब्रह्मणः सुतः ।
यथा ससर्ज भूतानि लब्ध्वा भार्यां च मानवीम् ॥ ५ ॥

*rucir yo bhagavān brahman*
*dakṣo vā brahmaṇaḥ sutaḥ*
*yathā sasarja bhūtāni*
*labdhvā bhāryāṁ ca mānavīm*

*ruciḥ*—Ruci; *yaḥ*—who; *bhagavān*—worshipful; *brahman*—O holy sage; *dakṣaḥ*—Dakṣa; *vā*—and; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of Lord Brahmā; *sutaḥ*—the son; *yathā*—in what way; *sasarja*—generated; *bhūtāni*—offspring; *labdhvā*—after securing; *bhāryām*—as their wives; *ca*—and; *mānavīm*—the daughters of Svāyambhuva Manu.

**TRANSLATION**

**O holy sage, tell me how the worshipful Ruci and Dakṣa, the son of Brahmā, generated children after securing as their wives the other two daughters of Svāyambhuva Manu.**

**PURPORT**

All the great personalities who increased the population in the beginning of the creation are called Prajāpatis. Brahmā is also known as Prajāpati, as were some of his later sons. Svāyambhuva Manu is also known as Prajāpati, as is Dakṣa, another son of Brahmā. Svāyambhuva had two daughters, Ākūti and Prasūti. The Prajāpati Ruci married Ākūti, and Dakṣa married Prasūti. These couples and their children produced immense numbers of children to populate the entire universe. Vidura's inquiry was, "How did they beget the population in the beginning?"

**TEXT 6**

*मैत्रेय उवाच*

प्रजाः सृजेति भगवान् कर्दमो ब्रह्मणोदितः ।
सरस्वत्यां तपस्तेपे सहस्राणां समा दश ॥ ६ ॥

*maitreya uvāca*
*prajāḥ sṛjeti bhagavān*
*kardamo brahmaṇoditaḥ*
*sarasvatyāṁ tapas tepe*
*sahasrāṇāṁ samā daśa*

*maitreyaḥ uvāca*—the great sage Maitreya said; *prajāḥ*—children; *sṛja*—beget; *iti*—thus; *bhagavān*—the worshipful; *kardamaḥ*—Kardama Muni; *brahmaṇā*—by Lord Brahmā; *uditaḥ*—commanded; *sarasvatyām*—on the bank of the River Sarasvatī; *tapaḥ*—penance; *tepe*—practiced; *sahasrāṇām*—of thousands; *samāḥ*—years; *daśa*—ten.

**TRANSLATION**

**The great sage Maitreya replied: Commanded by Lord Brahmā to beget children in the worlds, the worshipful Kardama Muni practiced penance on the bank of the River Sarasvatī for a period of ten thousand years.**

**PURPORT**

It is understood herein that Kardama Muni meditated in *yoga* for ten thousand years before attaining perfection. Similarly, we have information that Vālmīki Muni also practiced *yoga* meditation for sixty thousand years before attaining perfection. Therefore, *yoga* practice can be successfully performed by persons who have a very long duration of life, such as one hundred thousand years; in that way it is possible to have perfection in *yoga*. Otherwise, there is no possibility of attaining the real perfection. Following the regulations, controlling the senses and practicing the different sitting postures are merely the preliminary practices. We do not know how people can be captivated by the bogus *yoga* system in which it is stated that simply by meditating fifteen minutes daily one can attain the perfection of becoming one with God. This age (Kali-yuga) is the age of bluffing and quarrel. Actually there is no possibility of attaining *yoga* perfection by such paltry proposals. The Vedic literature, for emphasis, clearly states three times that in this age of Kali—*kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva*—there is no other alternative, no other alternative, no other alternative than *harer nāma*, chanting the holy name of the Lord.

**TEXT 7**

ततः समाधियुक्तेन क्रियायोगेन कर्दमः ।
सम्प्रपेदे हरिं भक्त्या प्रपन्नवरदाशुषम् ॥ ७ ॥

*tataḥ samādhi-yuktena*
*kriyā-yogena kardamaḥ*
*samprapede hariṁ bhaktyā*
*prapanna-varadāśuṣam*

*tataḥ*—then, in that penance; *samādhi-yuktena*—in trance; *kriyā-yogena*—by *bhakti-yoga* worship; *kardamaḥ*—the sage Kardama; *samprapede*—served; *harim*—the Personality of Godhead; *bhaktyā*—in devotional service; *prapanna*—to the surrendered souls; *varadāśuṣam*—the bestower of all blessings.

**TRANSLATION**

**During that period of penance, the sage Kardama, by worship through devotional service in trance, propitiated the Personality of Godhead, who is the quick bestower of all blessings upon those who flee to Him for protection.**

**PURPORT**

The significance of meditation is described here. Kardama Muni practiced mystic *yoga* meditation for ten thousand years just to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari. Therefore, whether one practices *yoga* or speculates and does research to find God, one's efforts must be mixed with the process of devotion. Without devotion, nothing can be perfect. The target of perfection and realization is the Supreme Per-

sonality of Godhead. In the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly said that one who constantly engages in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the topmost *yogī*. The Personality of Godhead, Hari, also fulfills the desires of His surrendered devotee. One has to surrender unto the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, Hari, or Kṛṣṇa, in order to achieve real success. Devotional service, or engagement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is the direct method, and all other methods, although recommended, are indirect. In this age of Kali the direct method is especially more feasible than the indirect because people are short-living, their intelligence is poor, and they are poverty-stricken and embarrassed by so many miserable disturbances. Lord Caitanya, therefore, has given the greatest boon: in this age one simply has to chant the holy name of God to attain perfection in spiritual life.

The words *samprapede harim* mean that in various ways Kardama Muni satisfied the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, by his devotional service. Devotional service is also expressed by the word *kriyā-yogena*. Kardama Muni not only meditated but also engaged in devotional service; to attain perfection in *yoga* practice or meditation, one must act in devotional service by hearing, chanting, remembering, etc. Remembering is meditation also. But who is to be remembered? One should remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Not only must one remember the Supreme Person; one must hear about the activities of the Lord and chant His glories. This information is in the authoritative scriptures. After engaging himself for ten thousand years in performing different types of devotional service, Kardama Muni attained the perfection of meditation, but that is not possible in this age of Kali, wherein it is very difficult to live for as much as one hundred years. At the present moment, who will be successful in the rigid performance of the many *yoga* rules and regulations? Moreover, perfection is attained only by those who are surrendered souls. Where there is no mention of the Personality of Godhead, where is there surrender? And where there is no meditation upon the Personality of Godhead, where is the *yoga* practice? Unfortunately, people in this age, especially persons who are of a demoniac nature, want to be cheated. Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead sends great cheaters who mislead them in the name of *yoga* and render their lives useless and doomed. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, therefore, it is clearly stated, in the Sixteenth Chapter, verse 17, that rascals of self-made authority, being puffed up by illegally collected money, perform *yoga* without following the authoritative books. They are very proud of the money they have plundered from innocent persons who wanted to be cheated.

### TEXT 8

**तावत्प्रसन्नो भगवान् पुष्कराक्षः कृते युगे ।**
**दर्शयामास तं क्षत्तः शाब्दं ब्रह्म दधद्वपुः ॥ ८ ॥**

*tāvat prasanno bhagavān*
*puṣkarākṣaḥ kṛte yuge*
*darśayām āsa taṁ kṣattaḥ*
*śābdaṁ brahma dadhad vapuḥ*

*tāvat*—then; *prasannaḥ*—being pleased; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *puṣkara-akṣaḥ*—lotus-eyed; *kṛte yuge*—in the Satya-yuga; *darśayām āsa*—showed; *tam*—to that Kardama Muni; *kṣattaḥ*—O Vidura; *śābdam*—which is to be understood only through the *Vedas*; *brahma*—the Absolute Truth; *dadhat*—exhibiting; *vapuḥ*—His transcendental body.

### TRANSLATION

**Then, in the Satya-yuga, the lotus-eyed Supreme Personality of Godhead, being pleased, showed Himself to that Kardama Muni and displayed His transcendental form, which can be understood only through the Vedas.**

### PURPORT

Here two points are very significant. The first is that Kardama Muni attained success by *yoga* practice in the beginning of Satya-yuga, when people used to live for one hundred thousand years. Kardama Muni attained success, and the Lord, being pleased with him, showed him His form, which is not imaginary. Sometimes the impersonalists recommend that one can arbitrarily concentrate one's mind on some form he imagines or which pleases him. But here it is very clearly said that the form which the Lord showed to Kardama Muni by His divine grace is described in the Vedic literature. *Śābdaṁ brahma:* the forms of the Lord are clearly indicated in the Vedic literature. Kardama Muni did not discover any imaginary form of God, as alleged by rascals; he actually saw the eternal, blissful and transcendental form of the Lord.

### TEXT 9

**स तं विरजमर्काभं सितपद्मोत्पलस्रजम् ।**
**स्निग्धनीलालकव्रातवक्त्राब्जं विरजोऽम्बरम् ॥९॥**

*sa taṁ virajam arkābhaṁ*
*sita-padmotpala-srajam*
*snigdha-nīlālaka-vrāta-*
*vaktrābjaṁ virajo 'mbaram*

*saḥ*—that Kardama Muni; *tam*—Him; *virajam*—without contamination; *arka-ābham*—effulgent like the sun; *sita*—white; *padma*—lotuses; *utpala*—water lilies; *srajam*—garland; *snigdha*—slick; *nīla*—blackish-blue; *alaka*—of locks of hair; *vrāta*—an abundance; *vaktra*—face; *abjam*—lotuslike; *virajaḥ*—spotless; *ambaram*—clothing.

### TRANSLATION

**Kardama Muni saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is free from material contamination, in His eternal form, effulgent like the sun, wearing a garland of white lotuses and water lilies. The Lord was clad in spotless yellow silk, and His lotus face was fringed with slick dark locks of curly hair.**

### TEXT 10

**किरीटिनं कुण्डलिनं शङ्खचक्रगदाधरम् ।**
**श्वेतोत्पलक्रीडनकं मनःस्पर्शस्मितेक्षणम् ॥१०॥**

*kirīṭinaṁ kuṇḍalinaṁ*
*śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dharam*
*śvetotpala-krīḍanakaṁ*
*manaḥ-sparśa-smitekṣaṇam*

*kirīṭinam*—adorned with a crown; *kuṇḍalinam*—wearing earrings; *śaṅkha*—conch; *cakra*—disc; *gadā*—mace; *dharam*—holding; *śveta*—white; *utpala*—lily; *krīḍanakam*—plaything; *manaḥ*—heart; *sparśa*—touching; *smita*—smiling; *īkṣaṇam*—and glancing.

### TRANSLATION

**Adorned with a crown and earrings, He held His characteristic conch, disc and mace in three of His hands and a white lily in the fourth. He glanced about in a happy, smiling mood whose sight captivates the hearts of all devotees.**

### TEXT 11

**विन्यस्तचरणाम्भोजमंसदेशे गरुत्मतः ।**
**दृष्ट्वा खेऽवस्थितं वक्षःश्रियं कौस्तुभकन्धरम् ॥११॥**

*vinyasta-caraṇāmbhojam*
*aṁsa-deśe garutmataḥ*
*dṛṣṭvā khe 'vasthitaṁ vakṣaḥ-*
*śriyaṁ kaustubha-kandharam*

*vinyasta*—having been placed; *caraṇa-ambhojam*—lotus feet; *aṁsa-deśe*—on the shoulders; *garutmataḥ*—of Garuḍa; *dṛṣṭvā*—having seen; *khe*—in the air; *avasthitam*—standing; *vakṣaḥ*—on His chest; *śriyam*—auspicious mark; *kaustubha*—the Kaustubha gem; *kandharam*—neck.

### TRANSLATION

**A golden streak on His chest, the famous Kaustubha gem suspended from His neck, He stood in the air with His lotus feet placed on the shoulders of Garuḍa.**

### PURPORT

The descriptions in verses 9–11 of the Lord in His transcendental, eternal form are understood to be descriptions from the authoritative Vedic version. These descriptions are certainly not the imagination of Kardama Muni. The decorations of the Lord are beyond material conception, as admitted even by impersonalists like Śaṅkarācārya: Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has nothing to do with the material creation. The varieties of the transcendental Lord—His body, His form, His dress, His instruction, His words—are not manufactured by the material energy, but are all confirmed in the Vedic literature. By performance of *yoga* Kardama Muni actually saw the Supreme Lord as He is. There was no point in seeing an imagined form of God after practicing *yoga* for ten thousand years. The perfection of *yoga*, therefore, does not terminate in voidness or impersonalism; on the contrary, the perfection of *yoga* is attained when one actually sees the Personality of Godhead in His eternal form. The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to deliver the form of Kṛṣṇa directly. The form of Kṛṣṇa is described in the authoritative Vedic literature *Brahma-saṁhitā:* His abode is made of *cintāmaṇi* stone, and the Lord plays there as a cowherd boy and is served by many thousands of *gopīs.* These descriptions are authoritative, and a Kṛṣṇa conscious person takes them directly, acts on them, preaches them and practices devotional service as enjoined in the authoritative scriptures.

### TEXT 12

जातहर्षोऽपतन्मूर्ध्ना क्षितौ लब्धमनोरथः ।
गीर्भिस्त्वभ्यगृणात्प्रीतिस्वभावात्मा कृताञ्जलिः ॥१२॥

*jāta-harṣo 'patan mūrdhnā*
*kṣitau labdha-manorathaḥ*
*gīrbhis tv abhyagṛṇāt prīti-*
*svabhāvātmā kṛtāñjaliḥ*

*jāta-harṣaḥ*—naturally jubilant; *apatat*—he fell down; *mūrdhnā*—with his head; *kṣitau*—on the ground; *labdha*—having been achieved; *manaḥ-rathaḥ*—his desire; *gīrbhiḥ*—with prayers; *tu*—and; *abhyagṛṇāt*—he satisfied; *prīti-svabhāva-ātmā*—whose heart is by nature always full of love; *kṛta-añjaliḥ*—with folded hands.

### TRANSLATION

**When Kardama Muni actually realized the Supreme Personality of Godhead in person, he was greatly satisfied because his transcendental desire was fulfilled. He fell on the ground with his head bowed to offer obeisances unto the lotus feet of the Lord. His heart naturally full of love of God, with folded hands he satisfied the Lord with prayers.**

### PURPORT

The realization of the personal form of the Lord is the highest perfectional stage of *yoga.* In the Sixth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā,* where *yoga* practice is described, this realization of the personal form of the Lord is called the perfection of *yoga.* After practicing the sitting postures and other regulative principles of the system, one finally reaches the stage of *samādhi*—absorption in the Supreme. In the *samādhi* stage one can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His partial form as Paramātmā, or as He is. *Samādhi* is described in authoritative *yoga* scriptures, such as the *Patañjali-sūtras,* to be a transcendental pleasure. The *yoga* system described in the books of Patañjali is authoritative, and the modern so-called *yogīs* who have manufactured their own ways, not consulting the authorities, are simply ludicrous. The Patañjali *yoga* system is called *aṣṭāṅga-yoga.* Sometimes impersonalists pollute the Patañjali *yoga* system because they are monists. Patañjali describes that the soul is transcendentally pleased when he meets the Supersoul and sees Him. If the existence of the Supersoul and the individual is admitted, then the impersonalist theory of monism is nullified. Therefore some impersonalists and void philosophers twist the Patañjali system in their own way and pollute the whole *yoga* process.

According to Patañjali, when one becomes free from all material desires he attains his real, transcendental situation, and realization of that stage is called spiritual power. In material activities a person engages in the modes of material nature. The aspirations of such people are (1) to be religious, (2) to be economically enriched, (3) to be able to gratify the senses and, at last, (4) to become one with the Supreme. According to the monists, when a *yogī* becomes one with the Supreme and loses his individual existence, he attains the highest stage, called *kaivalya.* But actually, the stage of realization of the Personality of Godhead is *kaivalya.* The oneness of understanding that the Supreme Lord is fully spiritual and that in full spiritual realization one can understand what He is—the Supreme Personality of Godhead—is called *kaivalya,* or, in the language of Patañjali, realization of spiritual power. His proposal is that when one is freed from material desires and fixed in spiritual realization of the self and the Superself, that is called *cit-śakti.* In full spiritual realization there is a perception of spiritual happiness, and that happiness is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* as the supreme happiness, which is beyond the material senses. Trance is described to be of two kinds, *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta,* or mental speculation and self-realization. In *samādhi* or *asamprajñāta* one can realize, by his spiritual senses, the spiritual form of the Lord. That is the ultimate goal of spiritual realization.

According to Patañjali, when one is fixed in constant realization of the supreme form of the Lord, one has attained the perfectional stage, as attained by Kardama Muni. Unless one attains this stage of perfection—beyond the perfection of the preliminaries of the *yoga* system—there is no ultimate realization. There are eight perfections in the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system. One who has attained them can become lighter than the lightest and greater than the greatest, and he can achieve whatever he likes. But even achieving such material success in *yoga* is not the perfection or the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is described here: Kardama Muni saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His eternal form. Devotional service begins with the relationship of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, or Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and when one attains it there is no question of falling down. If, through the *yoga* system, one wants to attain the stage of seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face, but is attracted instead to attainment of some material power, then he is detoured from proceeding further. Material enjoyment, as encouraged by bogus *yogīs,* has nothing to do with the transcendental realization of spiritual happiness. Real devotees of *bhakti-yoga* accept only the material necessities of life absolutely needed to maintain the body and soul together; they refrain completely from all exaggerated material sense gratification. They are prepared to undergo all kinds of tribulation, provided they can make progress in the realization of the Personality of Godhead.

### TEXT 13

ऋषिरुवाच

जुष्टं बताद्याखिलसत्त्वराशेः
सांसिद्ध्यमक्ष्णोस्तव दर्शनान्नः ।
यद्दर्शनं जन्मभिरीड्य सद्भि-
राशासते योगिनो रूढयोगाः ॥१३॥

*ṛṣir uvāca*
*juṣṭaṁ batādyākhila-sattva-rāśeḥ*
*sāṁsiddhyam akṣṇos tava darśanān naḥ*
*yad-darśanaṁ janmabhir īḍya sadbhir*
*āśāsate yogino rūḍha-yogāḥ*

*ṛṣiḥ uvāca*—the great sage said; *juṣṭam*—is attained; *bata*—ah; *adya*—now; *akhila*—all; *sattva*—of goodness; *rāśeḥ*—who are the reservoir; *sāṁsiddhyam*—the complete success; *akṣṇoḥ*—of the two eyes; *tava*—of You; *darśanāt*—from the sight; *naḥ*—by us; *yat*—of whom; *darśanam*—sight; *janmabhiḥ*—through births; *īḍya*—O worshipable Lord; *sadbhiḥ*—gradually elevated in position; *āśāsate*—aspire; *yoginaḥ*—yogīs; *rūḍha-yogāḥ*—having obtained perfection in *yoga.*

### TRANSLATION

**The great sage Kardama said: O supreme worshipful Lord, my power of sight is now fulfilled, having attained the greatest perfection of the sight of You, who are the reservoir of all existences. Through many successive births of deep meditation, advanced yogīs aspire to see Your transcendental form.**

(*continued in next issue*)

# Supreme Authority

(*continued from page 20*)

happy; so why am I always afflicted with so many kinds of suffering?" This is the genuine question. But people have become so foolish that they do not inquire into how to make a solution to their suffering, how to solve the problems of life. They are blind, and they are being led by blind men (*andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānāḥ*).

People hope that by making some arrangement in this material world, they will be happy. But that is not possible. The people in Europe and America have made sufficient material arrangements for living very happily, but they are still disappointed, confused.

So, materially you cannot be happy. You must first have full knowledge of what you are, what your body is, and who the supreme controller of both is. Then you'll be happy; then your life is successful. But if you live like the cats and dogs, trying to adjust things like the cats and dogs, you will waste your life. Therefore kindly try to understand the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is full of knowledge given by the perfect source, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

There is no deficiency in knowledge given by the Supreme Lord. In knowledge received from imperfect persons, there must be deficiencies because all imperfect persons are subject to four defects: their senses are imperfect, they make mistakes, they become illusioned, and they have a tendency to cheat. From people with so many defects you cannot get perfect knowledge. You have to receive knowledge from the perfect person—the Supreme Lord—or His bona fide representative. Then your life will be successful.

Therefore Arjuna is putting so many questions to Kṛṣṇa in the Thirteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Especially in this chapter Kṛṣṇa answers the questions What is this body? and Who is the knower of the body? In the third verse Kṛṣṇa says, *kṣetra-jñaṁ cāpi māṁ viddhi:* "I am also the knower of each body." The Māyāvāda [impersonalistic] philosophers say that there is only one spirit within the body. No, there are two—the individual soul and Kṛṣṇa.

The individual living soul is the occupier of his body, but Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor. And Kṛṣṇa has an interest in every body. He is like a landlord. A landlord has many houses. Suppose I occupy one of his houses. Then I will have an interest in that particular house. But the landlord has an interest in all his houses. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa has an interest not only in my body or your body but in each and every body in every species of life (*sarva-yoniṣu*). These things are to be understood very clearly.

Kṛṣṇa is related not only with the human society but also with the animal society, the dog society, the cat society, the demigod society, the aquatic society, the tree society, the plant society, the insect society. Everywhere Kṛṣṇa is present as the Paramātmā, the Supersoul.

So this subject matter is very interesting. Of course, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is the ABC's of spiritual knowledge. Unfortunately, people are neglecting even the ABC's. So it is our duty to propagate the knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā*. We are doing our best, and we wish that everyone, especially Indians, should cooperate with this movement.

Thank you very much.

# FACE OF DANGER

(*continued from page 12*)

will find that the ocean of dangerous conditions in the material world shrinks to the amount of water in the hoofprint of a calf. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy and protection, therefore, even the fear of death has a transcendental value and purpose: it can inspire us to turn to Him.

Queen Kuntī, Kṛṣṇa's aunt and the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, expressed this uncommon understanding of the value of fear. She said, "While we were living in the forest, having been banished from our kingdom by political intrigue, and all kinds of fearful conditions appeared before us, we would become at once relieved by remembrance of Your lotus feet. May those fearful conditions come to us again and again so that we may remember You again and again." For her, fear was an impetus to expand devotional surrender. From that point of view, it was a welcome addition to life, not something to be avoided at all costs. Just see the difference in mentality between a devotee and a nondevotee!

Rather than fearing death, an advanced devotee looks forward to serving Kṛṣṇa in his transcendental, spiritual form. A materialist wants to cling to his body even after its usefulness is finished, because he sees death as the end of all existence. A professor in Moscow told Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Swamiji, when the body is finished, everything is finished." When one has such a fatalistic philosophy of life, death is certainly a great disaster. Gone are the days of enjoyment of the various delightful spices of life, for when death comes, everything is taken away.

A devotee can never be fooled into complacency by the materialists' shallow and unsubstantiated arguments. Persons brainwashed by the propaganda of the scientific community may unconditionally accept death as the end of existence, but no devotee can agree with such foolish idealism. The materialist may wish that death will end his suffering, but the devotee knows that this attempt to deny the ultimate existence of life's miseries is simply the result of thousands of lifetimes of conditioning in this material world.

A devotee becomes peaceful through knowledge. He understands the meaning of life, and he understands that death is simply a change of body. Just as he is not bewildered by the changes of body he experiences within this lifetime, he is not bewildered by the change of body at death. He constantly strives to purify himself of his dependency on the facilities of the material world that are meant to pamper the needs of his material body. Living simply, but thinking on a highly evolved platform of spiritual awareness, the devotee gradually transforms his consciousness to the highest level of ecstatic relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the supreme controller and enjoyer.

For a devotee, the greatest fear is to forget Kṛṣṇa, or to somehow lose the opportunity to serve Him. Therefore a devotee never indulges in the obsessions of the materialists. The constant reminders of the temporality of life spur him on to greater philosophical and devotional heights. A devotee considers the creation of *māyā* to be like the glittering of fool's gold: although it captures the eye, it has no value. This material world is a phantasmagoria, like the creation of a showman in a haunted house in an amusement park. But the devotee sees clearly and remains aloof from the plans and designs of the material civilization. This sometimes creates doubts in the minds of materialists, who cannot conceive of someone being factually detached from the material world. Despite the occasional opposition created by such doubtful and small-minded persons, the devotees continue to advance on the path of devotional service to the Lord.

What is fear ultimately? It is the platform of forgetfulness of one's original relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As soon as one thinks he is anything other than the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord, he immediately falls into a situation of intense fearfulness. The material world is meant to be a fearful place, for its purpose is to awaken us to our original, constitutional condition of spiritual life. When one surrenders to Kṛṣṇa in pure love, material fearfulness goes far away. Material fear, therefore, has no place within the spiritual realm.

The *bhavauṣadhi*, or the medicine for the pangs of material existence, is to chant the holy names of the Lord: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy.

God can be seen, but, as in "seeing" the atom, we must be trained to interpret the relevant data.

# GOD

# An Objective Fact?

by DHANAÑJAYA PAṆḌITA DĀSA

Many intellectuals seem to agree with Karl Marx's statement that religion is the opium of the people. A common misconception in these times is that God is an anthropomorphic projection, a psychological crutch for those who are helplessly bewildered by the problems of life and who haven't the guts to face reality. This unfortunate misconception prevents people from learning that God's existence is an objective fact.

To demonstrate that God's existence is every bit as objective as a brick wall, we will have to define what we mean by *objective.* According to Webster's dictionary, the word *objective* means "of or having to do with a known or perceived object, as distinguished from something existing only in the mind of the subject." To say that something objectively exists means that it has its own independent existence and is not the product of someone's imagination. So how do we demonstrate that God's existence is not the product of our imagination?

"Show me God," many people say. I hear this all the time. "OK, if God exists, prove it. Show me God right now"—as if seeing something were the only test of its existence. All right, you can see God, but seeing God is not a cheap thing. The problem is that people expect to instantly see God on demand. You can see God as directly as you are seeing this page, but it takes time. You have to become qualified.

Besides, why do we have to *see* something to believe it? "Seeing is believing," we say, but actually we believe in many things we don't see. It's only when we don't want to believe something that we make the rules

ILLUSTRATION: DETAIL FROM A PAINTING BY JAYARĀMA DĀSA
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more difficult and say we have to see it to believe it.

If we hear on the radio that there is a raging fire in a chemical factory on the other side of town, we accept it. We don't say, "Show me the fire." We accept it because we trust the radio announcer. Besides, we haven't got time to drive all over town verifying everything for ourselves. The fire is an objective fact even though we didn't see it ourselves.

Death is also an objective fact. Would anyone dare to propose that death is a product of our imagination? I don't think so. But on the other hand, none of us has yet seen our own death. So how can we know that our death is certain, if we haven't seen it? We can know by extrapolation. Everyone in the past has died, without exception. So it is reasonable to conclude that for us, too, death is an undeniable fact.

What about the existence of the atom? Surely nobody would complain that knowledge of the atom is merely one person's subjective belief. But can we show someone an atom? Well, we can demonstrate that atoms exist, but it takes time. You can't just walk into a particle-accelerator laboratory and right up to a bunch of scientists who are busily adjusting knobs and staring into computer screens and demand that they instantly prove to you the existence of atoms simply by showing them to you.

First of all, atoms are too small to see, even with an electron microscope, so there is no possibility that anyone can show you an atom. And even if the scientists of whom you impudently demanded immediate proof of the atom were to actually give you the proof, which might be some bewildering equations and numbers on a computer printout, you wouldn't even be able to understand it. You'd say, "Where's the atom? I don't see any atom." You don't see the atom because you haven't been trained to interpret the data that demonstrate the existence of the atom. You have some childish idea that for something to exist factually and objectively, you have to be able to see it.

We can perceive the atom only by inference. Because of the behavior of matter under precisely controlled conditions, we can understand that the atom *must* exist. But without these conditions and without having studied chemistry and physics, we can never understand the proof of the existence of an atom.

So why pull out a double standard when it comes to proving the existence of God? We accept as a fact the fire on the other side of town without having seen it. We accept that we are going to die, even though we haven't seen our death. We accept the scientists' declaration that there are atoms, even though the scientists themselves have not seen them. Why then turn around and say that anyone who accepts the existence of God is groping for a psychological crutch because of a weakness of character?

There is a process for understanding everything, and there is an appropriate process for understanding God. You must enroll in an authorized course of study. Use the textbooks that have proven to be the most effective manuals for spiritual education and are recommended by the experts in the field. Follow the proper procedures under controlled conditions, if you want direct perception of God Himself. It is as systematic and predictable as any science.

Yet there is a difference between the process by which we can understand God and the process of understanding matter—because God, Kṛṣṇa, is a person.

> *Because matter is not alive, we can shove it around any way we want without difficulty. But is it reasonable to assume we can apply to our search for the Supreme Lord the same methods we use to investigate matter?*

Because matter is not alive, we can shove it around any way we want without difficulty. But who says controlled manipulation is the only process for getting knowledge? Is it even reasonable to assume we can apply to our search for the Supreme Lord the same methods we use to investigate matter? After all, Kṛṣṇa, God, is a person who thinks and feels and desires just like us. But unlike us, He is unlimited. He knows everything. He is eternal. He controls everything. But He is a conscious person nonetheless.

Now, if you want to know something about a person, the best way to find out is to ask him. If you want to know, say, why a person is wearing a locket around his neck, you'd probably be well advised not to take the same approach we use for examining matter. You probably wouldn't do well to walk up to the person, and without saying anything to him, grab the locket and start examining it, trying to pry it open. You'd probably get a knee in the ribs if you tried that. With persons, it helps to be personal. You try to please them, and if they want they can tell you all about themselves.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is a person, and He's our superior. Why should He immediately respond to our demand that He appear on the spot? If I were to call you up on the phone and say, "I command you to immediately come to my home," would you feel obliged to do it? I doubt it.

Kṛṣṇa Himself tells us how to know Him in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55), *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ:* "One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service." The process for understanding Kṛṣṇa is to please Him. Then, if He wants to, He can give us knowledge of Himself. But how exactly do we go about pleasing Kṛṣṇa? What do we do? What do we say? How do we know if we are doing the right thing?

As in any field, to learn quickly without getting lost or sidetracked we need a teacher. We need someone who knows the science of God, someone who can guide us through our studies. Don't just pick any person who "looks spiritual." We want someone who has been practicing the process for a long time and is an expert. He should know all the standard spiritual texts. And most important, he should love Kṛṣṇa above all else. A person obsessed with love for Kṛṣṇa will have no interest in catering to the demands of his body. He is not looking for pleasure from his tongue, his eyes, his ears, or his genitals, because he is absorbed in a higher pleasure. A spiritual teacher must also be free from anger and attachment—no fits of rage because someone dented his fender in the parking lot. And even if his house burns down, his wife runs off with another man, and he inherits a million dollars—all in one day—still he should be calm and peaceful, because one who knows Kṛṣṇa is with Kṛṣṇa, beyond this world. A tall order for you or me. But these are the qualifications of a genuine spiritual master.

Yet even if you find such a spiritual master, you as a student also have to be qualified. You have to follow the instructions of the teacher. If you do so, then you will see Kṛṣṇa. If you don't, you won't.

Then you too will be able to honestly say, "Kṛṣṇa is an objective fact. I know, because I have seen Him," as many have said before. People who will not accept God unless we can immediately show them God are just like blindfolded men demanding to see the sun without removing their blindfolds. Unfortunately, with such an attitude, such persons will never know that God is an objective fact.

# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## Soul-Killing Rascals

*This is the continuation of a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, on June 26, 1976.*

**Disciple:** Śrīla Prabhupāda, some people will agree that a real civilization trains its citizens to find happiness in spiritual principles and godly living. Some may also agree that in a real civilization, one part of the populace learns the role of material providers. Yet these same people may disagree that still another part of the populace should learn the role of protectors and find happiness in fighting.

"What is so godly about fighting?" they may ask. "Why train the so-called militarily-inclined to find happiness in fighting? This is a selfish type of happiness. You're not considering that their fighting will cause misery. What about all the maimed and the killed and their families? You ought to consider all this misery caused by your so-called protectors."

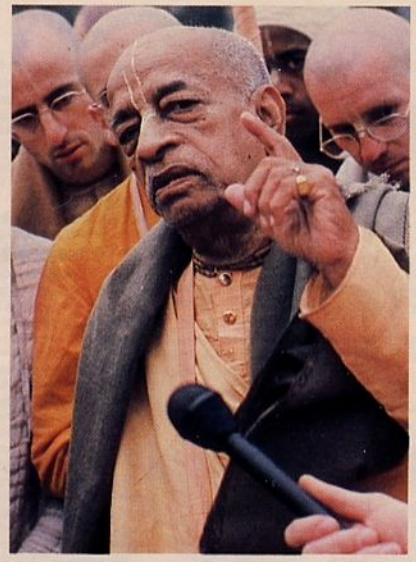
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Some people may think in this way. But such people are rascals; they cannot think at all. We haven't got to reply to any of them, because they are rascals. They can talk all nonsense. We don't have to care about their nonsense. Take a child—he's talking so many foolish things. Sometimes we reply, "Yes, yes, we know." But we don't take seriously anything—anything—spoken by a child. So these rascals may go on talking so many things, but we don't care about any of them. We have to do our own business. Let the dog bark; the caravan will pass. So it is not that we have to care about the barking of the dogs. Let them bark.

[*To disciple:*] Continue reading.

**Disciple** [*reading from* Bhagavad-gītā *16.6, 8*]: "O son of Pṛthā, in this world there are two kinds of created beings. One is called the divine and the other the demoniac. I have already explained to you at length the divine qualities. Now hear from Me of the demoniac.

"They say that this world is unreal, with no foundation, no God in control. They say it is produced of sex desire and has no cause other than lust."

Purport, by Śrīla Prabhupāda: "The



demoniac conclude that the world is phantasmagoria. There is no cause and effect, no controller, no purpose: everything is unreal. They say that this cosmic manifestation arises due to chance material actions and reactions. They do not think that the world was created by God for a certain purpose. They have their own theory: that the world has come about in its own way and that there is no reason to believe that there is a God behind it. For them there is no difference between spirit and matter, and they do not accept the Supreme Spirit. Everything is matter only, and the whole cosmos is supposed to be a mass of ignorance. According to them, everything is void, and whatever manifestation exists is due to our ignorance in perception. They take it for granted that all manifestation of diversity is a display of ignorance. Just as in a dream we may create so many things which actually have no existence, so when we are awake we shall see that everything is simply a dream. But factually, although the demons say that life is a dream, they are very expert in enjoying this dream. And so, instead of acquiring knowledge, they become more and more implicated in their dreamland. They conclude that as a child is simply the result of sexual intercourse between a man and woman, this world is born without any soul. For them it is only a combination of matter that has produced the living entities, and there is no question of the existence of the soul. As many living creatures come out from perspiration and from a dead body without any cause, the whole living world has come out of the material combinations of the cosmic manifestation. Therefore material nature is the cause of this manifestation, and there is no other cause. They do not believe in the words of Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā: mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram.* 'Under My direction the whole material world is moving.' In other words, among the demons there is no perfect knowledge of the creation of the world; every one of them has some particular theory of his own. According to them, one interpretation of the scriptures is as good as another, for they do not believe in a standard understanding of the scriptural injunctions."

Text 9: *etāṁ dṛṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno 'lpa-buddhayaḥ/ prabhavanty ugra-karmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ:* "Following such conclusions, the demoniac, who are lost to themselves and who have no intelligence, engage in unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world."

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This is the right description of the modern age. Exact—hm? *Etāṁ dṛṣṭim avastabhya.* And what is that next word?

**Disciple:** *Naṣṭātmānaḥ.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** *Naṣṭātmānaḥ:* "They have lost their soul." *Naṣṭātmānaḥ:* "They have no information of the soul." *Naṣṭātmānaḥ:* "God and the soul are forgotten."

"There is no God," these modern rascals say. "There is no cause of this creation; there is simply a big chunk." Like that. *Naṣṭātmānaḥ*—they have lost their very self.

*Naṣṭātmāno 'lpa buddhayaḥ:* these soul-killing rascals have no intelligence. Just like cats and dogs. "If these four principles are available—eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—then *bas,* everything's complete. Our human life is a perfect success." But no. If you are interested only in eating, sleeping, mating, and defending, then *alpa-buddhayaḥ*—you are a stupid animal.

*(To be continued.)*

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# Krishna Consciousness

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# Kṛṣṇa Meditation

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the origin of everyone and everything. While His expansions and representatives oversee His creation, Kṛṣṇa Himself eternally enjoys with His devotees in Goloka Vṛndāvana, His home in the spiritual world. Though uninformed or envious persons accuse Kṛṣṇa of being licentious, there is no question of impropriety in His loving exchanges with His

Painting by Ramadasa Abhirama dasa and Dhrti-devi dasi ©The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

devotees, who are, after all, expansions of Himself. Furthermore, the Lord and His devotees are bound by pure love, without a tinge of the lust that taints material relationships.

We are all meant to become part of the intimate pastimes of the spiritual world, and we can gain entrance into them when we give up all traces of envy of Kṛṣṇa and take pleasure in hearing about His spotless pastimes.

# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## Finding Spiritual Friends

Just as a person who desires to improve his tennis will seek out tennis experts and enthusiasts, so a person interested in spritual life will want like-minded friends. But where do we find them? And even if we meet students of self-realization and God consciousness, does it mean we will automatically develop loving friendships with them? The scripture states, "Seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." And so it is with spiritual friendships.

The surest way to find God conscious companions is to join with the topmost pure devotees, saints, and sages. Although most of them lived many centuries ago, we can be with them now in their writings, their teachings, and through their living followers. Although the pure devotees of a past age are not walking the earth today, we can become kindred spirits with them and benefit in a very personal way in their association.

According to Vedic knowledge, there are two ways to become intimate with advanced spiritual persons. One way is through their direct association, such as cooking with them, walking beside them, sitting and talking with them, and so on. This is called, in Sanskrit, *vapuḥ.* The effect of a friendship with an advanced devotee is described by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in *Harināma Cintāmaṇi:*

> If one stays near a pure Vaiṣṇava [devotee of Kṛṣṇa] for some time, one can receive the *bhakti* [devotional energy] flowing from his body. If one can bind that energy within one's heart, after one develops strong faith *bhakti* will develop. . . . Thus if one lives close to a Vaiṣṇava, devotion will soon appear within one's heart.

When we are not in the presence of a spiritual friend but we associate with him by hearing and following his instructions, that is called *vāṇī.* Of the two, the experts state that the *vāṇī* form of relationship is stronger and everlasting, whereas *vapuḥ,* although especially sweet, is subject to time, death, and other forms of human separation. Either in the form of *vapuḥ* or *vāṇī,* spiritual friendships are very influential. As one Vedic teacher said, "Association is very important. It acts just like a crystal stone, which will reflect anything put before it." The influence we receive through teachings and writings can act negatively or positively. For example, the nineteenth-century German poet Goethe poured out his youthful anguish in a novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* and the tragic result was that several young men committed suicide after reading *Werther.* As submissive readers can become degraded or doomed by poisonous writings, so the opposite is true: we can gain the highest goal of life, revival of our blissful, eternal relationship with God, by faithfully associating with pure souls through their biographies or recorded teachings.

But we cannot live only in books. We live in a world of people—family, friends, fellow workers, neighbors. As we traverse the spiritual path, we naturally want companions. For the inner life, we want close friends, not just formal or official relationships with people who are strangers to our soul. Personal association is so important that the Vedic scriptures caution us against living with those who are averse to godly life. In fact, when Lord Caitanya was asked by a follower to define a Vaiṣṇava, He replied, "He is one who avoids the association of materialistic people, sense enjoyers, and nondevotees." On another occasion, when Lord Caitanya asked His learned disciple Rāmānanda Rāya what was the most painful experience, Rāmānanda Rāya replied, "Apart from separation from the devotee of Kṛṣṇa, I know of no unbearable unhappiness." And it is stated in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta,* "Out of all kinds of desirable things experienced in the life of a living entity, association with the devotees of the Lord is the greatest. When we are separated from a devotee, even for a moment, we cannot enjoy happiness."

We can increase our chances of forming spiritual friendships by visiting a place such as a temple of Kṛṣṇa. But devotees are not found only in temples. Neither do they belong to a particular religious sect, live in a particular part of the world, or belong to a particular sex or age group. They are known by their genuine symptoms, which are described in the scriptures. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.21) states:

> The symptoms of a *sādhu* are that he is tolerant, merciful, and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.

In *The Nectar of Instruction,* written in the sixteenth century, Rūpa Gosvāmī analyzes devotees in three categories and advises us to honor *all* devotees. He describes the neophyte class as those who sometimes chant God's names but don't strictly follow all the rules of spiritual life. Devotees in the intermediate stage strictly follow rules and are fixed in their convictions about devotional service to God. Above all are the pure devotees, who harbor no envy toward any living creature, and who see everyone as a servant of God.

We should see all the devotees as our friends, and yet there is an art for selecting proper persons with careful discrimination. Rūpa Gosvāmī further explains that there are six kinds of loving exchanges among devotee friends:

> Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting *prasādam* [spiritual food], and offering *prasādam* are the six symptoms of love shared by one devotee and another.

The art and etiquette of friendships in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be best learned from genuine devotees.

If one has not developed a good spiritual friendship among the people he works and lives with, then he should pray for this and seek it out. We cannot keep aloof from spiritual friendships and at the same time please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "He who says he is My devotee is not My devotee. But he who is a devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee." Similarly, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a great Vaiṣṇava poet, wrote, "No one has ever become liberated without the association of devotees."

But perhaps my readers are already aware of the importance of spiritual friendships. And perhaps you already have connections with spiritual friends. In that case, let us simply remind each other not to neglect these valuable ties. Let us go to our friends and share the happiness of God-centered love. As described by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.9): "The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me."—**SDG**

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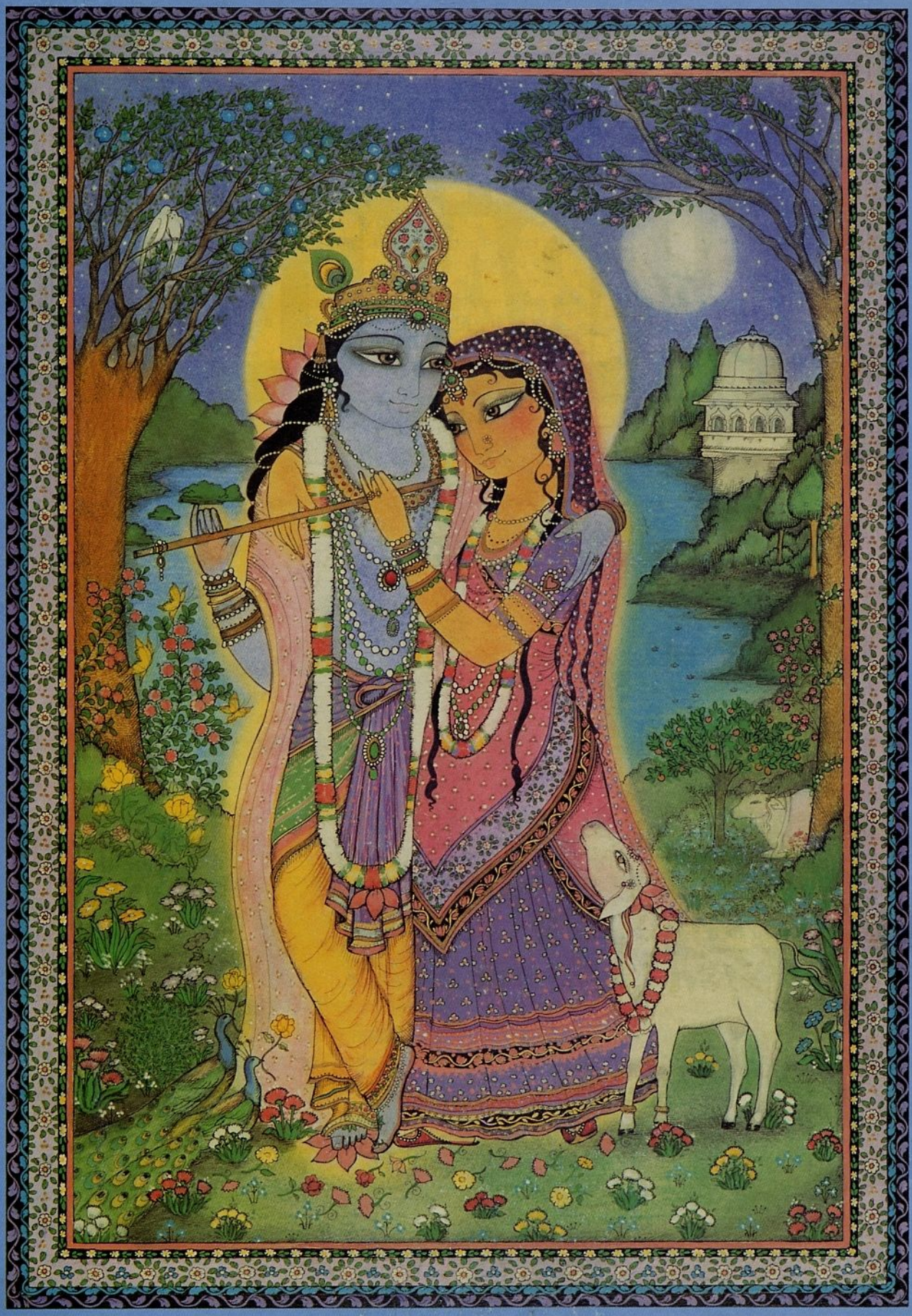
BEFORE

AFTER

One thing's sure about the Sunday Feast—you'll never leave hungry. The food—an all-vegetarian fare offered with love to Lord Kṛṣṇa—is just too good to resist. And there's always plenty for everyone. The food is known as *prasādam*, or "mercy," and although it isn't all there is to the Sunday Feast, it's an important part. Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself and who appeared only five hundred years ago, gave us the most enjoyable process of self-realisation: chanting and singing the names of God, dancing for His pleasure, and refreshing ourselves with His purifying *prasādam*. You'll find all this and more at the Sunday Feast. So for an experience that's sure to satisfy you—from your taste buds to your soul—come to the Sunday Feast, held every week at Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world. (See list of centers inside.)